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To / Mr. Holmes

with the Author's affectionate regards

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Sept 8 1846

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THE  
ENGLISHWOMAN IN EGYPT:

LETTERS FROM CAIRO,

WRITTEN DURING A RESIDENCE THERE IN 1845-46,

WITH

E. W. LANE, Esq.,

AUTHOR OF 'THE MODERN EGYPTIANS.

BY HIS SISTER.

*Sophia Lane*

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SECOND SERIES.

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# CONTENTS.

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## LETTER I.

GENERAL ideas of the moral and social state—The antiquity of the Hareem system—Eastern society considered with reference to marriage—Domestic unhappiness—Dis-honour not concealed—Custom of betrothing—Lives of Arab women of the lower orders—Law of triple divorce—Remarkable instance of affection—Multiplicity of husbands . . . . . pp. 5-17

## LETTER II.

Separation of the sexes—Advantages resulting from this—Early marriage of boys—Young girls matched with old men—Instance of the reverse—Prevalent cause of misery in the Hareems of the great—Want of unanimity among the children where there is a plurality of mothers—Slaves and eunuchs necessary to the Hareem system—The affectionate slave—Salubrity of the Egyptian climate—Shock of Earthquake—The streets of Cairo—Funeral procession of a Welee—Funeral of Khurseed Pasha . . . . . 18-32

## LETTER III.

Observances in a Christian or Coptic Hareem in case of death—Wailing of the attendants and relatives—Ad-

dresses to the dead—Dresses of the mourners—Attire of the corpse—Frantic grief of a husband—Superstitious observances—Ignorance of the Copts—Missionary Institution among the Copts—Labours of Mr. and Mrs. Lieder—Syrian girls—Frequency of blindness

pp. 33-42

#### LETTER IV.

Pastimes of Ladies—A braggadocio silenced, or the impudent beggar—Story of the man and the forty thieves—Making presents—Injudicious presents to a “sheykh of camels”—Thanks extorted—Advantage of backsheesh

43-54

#### LETTER V.

Bigotry of renegades—Cruelty of the Memlooks—Christian orphans—Vile character of apostate Christians—An abandoned renegade—Constancy of a Christian youth—Mildness of Mohammad Alee with reference to religion—English Church in Alexandria—Muslim enmity to Christians—Mock trial of Dr. Wolff . 55-60

#### LETTER VI.

A great marriage in Cairo—Palace and gardens of Ahmad Páshá—Festivities in the garden of the Ezbekeeyeh—Recantation of a Copt—Dancing and athletic performances—Procession of the bride—Improvement in Egyptian carriages . . . . 61-77

#### LETTER VII.

Marriage of Zeyneb Hánúm—Military procession—Festoons of lamps—Passing the curtain of the Hareem—Decorations and state of the bride—Magnificent pipes—Coffee in the manner of the high Hareem—Interior of



the Hareem—Mohammad Alee Bey's mother—Bridal presents—The lady-treasurer—Dinner in the European style—Sa'eed Páshá's wife—Ladies' divan—Romping girls—Arab dance . . . . pp. 78-96

## LETTER VIII.

Amusements of the old ladies of the Hareem—Theatrical exhibition—The Páshá's eldest wife—Arab female concert—Magnificence of the saloon—The 'Almehs' dance—Fountain room—Tears in the midst of rejoicing—Eunuch executed for theft—Breakfast in the Hareem—Arrival of the Páshá—Second procession of the bride—Bridegroom's presents—Entertainment of the people during the festivities—Paraphernalia of the bride conveyed to the Ezbekeeyeh . . . 97-117

## LETTER IX.

Mrs. Lieder's popularity in the Hareem—Dance of the Georgian girls—Polite attention of Nezleh Hánım—More dancing and a farce—Winter wrappers of ladies—Night arrangements in the Hareem—The Páshá dropping gold coins in the Hareem—Little Eastern lady—Eunuchs clearing the apartments—Throng of visitors—Passage of the bride on the seventh day of the feast—Her gorgeous dress—Child trodden to death during a shower of gold—The procession of candles—Procession of the bride from the citadel to her own palace . . . . . 118-136

## LETTER X.

Reception of the bride by her husband—The Páshá's attention to the widow of his son Isma'eel—Consequence of opening the prisons during the marriage festivities—

Impudent robberies—Scenes at the Moolid-en-Nabee—  
 Visit to the Armenian Bishop—Interior of the church  
 —Muslim prejudice—Horrid neglect of a child—The  
 night of solitude . . . . . pp. 137-148

### LETTER XI.

Death-cry for the "Sun of Happiness"—Destruction of pro-  
 perty after a death—The funeral procession and inter-  
 ment—Dr. Abbott's antiques—Ear-rings of Menes—  
 The signet-ring of Cheops—Superior workmanship of  
 ancient Egyptian ornaments . . . . . 149-153

### APPENDIX.

I. Description of the veils of Arab women .	page 155
II. On infancy and education . . . . .	156
III. On Muslim saints or devotees . . . . .	172
IV. On the apparel, &c. of mourning . . . . .	194
V. On the occupations of the Hareem . . . . .	195
VI. On presents . . . . .	197
VII. On marriage . . . . .	197
VIII. On the magnificence of Arab palaces . . . . .	211
IX. On meals and the manner of eating . . . . .	214
X. Festivities . . . . .	219
XI. Description of Arab fans . . . . .	245
XII. On the washing, shrouding, and burial of the dead . . . . .	246

THE  
ENGLISHWOMAN IN EGYPT.

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LETTER I.

January, 1845.

AFTER a residence of nearly three years in an Eastern country, in the habit of frequent and familiar intercourse with the ladies of the higher and middle classes of its population, you will probably think me able to convey some general ideas of their moral and social state. To do this, I find to be a task of extreme difficulty ; though my opportunities of observation have been such as, I believe, few Englishwomen have enjoyed. In examining the effects of the peculiar position in which females are here placed, I have endeavoured to divest myself of prejudice ; but altogether to lose sight of our English standards of propriety has been impossible, and as every state of society in the world has its defects, to avoid comparisons would be unnatural.

One thing that puzzles me among many others is this : that the main principle of the constitution of society prevailing now among all the Muslim nations, and even among the Eastern Christians, seems almost to receive a sanction from the practice of most of those persons whom from our childhood we have learned to regard with the greatest reverence.

In the mention of the veil we trace the Hareem system to the time of Abraham ; but to what period its origin is to be referred is, I believe, doubtful. In Abraham's time it seems to have been similar to the system which has hitherto prevailed among the Arabs of the desert, and to have been much less strict than that which commonly obtains among the Arabs and other Muslims established in fixed abodes, in cities, houses, and villages. Rebekah covered not her face in the presence of Abraham's servant, the "eldest servant of his house ;" but when she came before the man who was to be her husband, "she took a veil, and covered herself." In like manner, the women of the Bedaweess, in general, are often careless of veiling the face before servants, and persons with whom they are familiar ; and many of them have no scruple in appearing unveiled before strangers. When Abraham, or rather Abram, before the case above mentioned, went into Egypt with his wife, "the Egyptians beheld the woman, that she was very fair : the princes



also of Pharaoh saw her, and commended her before Pharaoh, and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house." After this, Abimelech also saw her, and took her.

It seems probable that the Hareem system, at this period, prevailed only, and in a lax manner, among the Semitic nations. We find no indications of it in the sculptures or paintings representing scenes of domestic life upon the ancient Egyptian monuments; some of which are anterior to the age of Abraham; on the contrary, in these representations of private life we see evidences of a state of society as free, with respect to the intercourse of the sexes, as that which prevails in modern Europe. Were the ancient Egyptians a more moral people, with this freedom of the women, than the contemporary nations among whom the females were more or less secluded? I am told that the reverse appears to have been the case: that proofs of the most shocking licentiousness, or, at least, of an utter want of feeling in each sex with respect to the other, are conspicuous upon the walls of the temples and tombs throughout the valley of the Nile. But I would not refer the licentiousness, or want of delicacy, of the ancient Egyptians to the freedom allowed to their women; as I am fully satisfied that virtuous women are far more common in Christian Europe than in the Eastern Hareems. Indeed, where there is in a woman a tendency to indelicacy in words or

actions, it is certainly checked by social intercourse with men ; and it is as certainly promoted by seclusion from them. Eastern women, essentially virtuous, are so accustomed, among themselves, to language which, to us, is grossly indelicate, that they often use it with the utmost simplicity, even in the presence of men. This, in my opinion, is one of the worst effects of the system of the Hareem.

Do not imagine that this is the beginning of an attempt to generalize, and to unravel the perplexing difficulties presented by this strange system. It is true that I have sometimes felt inclined to try my hand at a general picture of Eastern domestic life. The persons who would figure in it would, of course, be almost all females. But I must resist the temptation ; for I am sure that I should not succeed in the undertaking. You will perhaps say that this is a modest avowal. By no means is this the case, in my opinion ; for I do not believe that any one who would impose upon himself such a task, could satisfy himself or others. I shall therefore content myself with offering to you detached sketches ; and you may amuse yourself by trying if you can put them together so as to make a consistent whole. You will, I fancy, find them to resemble a dissected map, which some naughty child has played with in such a careless manner as to lose many of the pieces ; so that some of the pieces will fit

together very well ; others will fit only on one side ; and others will not fit at all, or can only be made to suit imperfectly by turning them upside-down. To make it the more amusing to you, I shall present to you the pieces in some degree of disorder.

One important circumstance must be ever borne in mind in taking into consideration the state of Eastern society with reference to marriage ; I mean the great similarity which exists in the minds of the people, both males and females. In Europe, preference depends on many causes—a woman prefers her husband for the peculiar tone of his mind, his religious opinions, and his moral code ; and even his political views often form the groundwork of harmony or dissension ; while his love for learning and scientific pursuits, or his talent for the fine arts, or his genius developing itself in any way, render him attractive to her, or the contrary. All these reasons for preference, or (in the absence of them) motives for dislike, exist in Europe, but have no place in the East. It is true there are a few educated Eastern men, among those who have studied in Europe ; but they have no idea of communicating their information to their families, nor do they, with very few exceptions, desire the education of their ladies : therefore the notions they have acquired abroad are perhaps never discussed. It is my idea that if an Eastern husband be found by his

bride, young, good-looking, and good-natured, she is perfectly satisfied, for she knows that her parents or protectors could not offer her a companion whose religious opinions and general views did not entirely coincide with her own.

It is pleasant to feel sure that there are instances, and that those instances are not uncommon, where an Eastern wife, when suitably married, gives her affection to her husband with a devotion which can hardly be surpassed, and receives from him every proof of tender and honourable love. I could give several examples of families thus happily circumstanced among our acquaintance, but they would too much resemble each other.

Among the females with whom I am acquainted, natives of this city, is one who has been for more than thirty years the wife of one husband, her first and only one, and whose home offers me much to approve and admire. Her husband seems to be possessed of much generosity, and of many other good qualities. His house, though he is a person of small income, is a kind of refuge for the destitute; not only for swarms of poor relations, but also for destitute dogs and cats; which he feeds, not with the relics or refuse of his table, but with piles of bread bought expressly for them. One of the most amiable of the traits in his wife's character is her devotion to his relations. While his mother lived, she was regarded and treated by her



as her own parent ; and, according to the usual custom of the East (a custom which I cannot too much applaud, and which is sufficient to make me overlook many faults in Eastern females), was always respected by her as the mistress of the house.

As another instance, I may mention a Turkish lady of rank who married many years ago to one of her own countrymen holding a distinguished position. He had about ten white slaves, who became the immediate attendants of his wife, and numerous black slaves, as inferior servants. The chief lady, an only wife, became the mother of several children, *therefore* she retained her priority both in his Hareem and in her husband's affection. Several of the white slaves became the concubines of their master, but he took no second *wife* ; and I do not understand that the peace of his lady was ever disturbed by jealous misgivings. Indeed, as an Eastern wife, she had no right to admit such feelings, being especially favoured. When, as in this case, an amiable woman responds to the affection of a worthy husband, their Hareem is, in her estimation, a paradise, for she has no wish beyond the society of her own family, her husband, and her children, and no desire for amusement beyond occasional fairy-like fêtes, of which her own home is the scene. Do not mistake me when I style a man a *worthy husband* who possesses concubines ; I mean worthy by comparison : and when I find some whose

manners and general bearing show them to be, in a moral sense, superior to their fellows, I am induced to pity those failings which arise from education, and to lament those sins against which they have no law. Until enlightened by the truths of the Gospel, no important reformation can be effected in the Hareem system, nor in the general morals of the East ; and I am inclined to think that centuries may elapse before any material change can be produced : so strong are the people's prejudices, and so firmly rooted are their habits of seclusion.

You may probably ask me how I can know the happiness of these and other families. I should therefore tell you that, in this country, people do not conceal their domestic unhappiness, but invariably weary their friends and acquaintance with their complaints on this subject, whenever they have any to make.

This leads me to remark what is most extraordinary. When an Eastern husband believes himself to be dishonoured by his wife, he publishes his misfortune and disgrace to all his neighbours, and often to strangers, and the relations of each party do the same ; even when such conduct may occasion a divorce, or the loss of the life of the accused. The wife, too, seems to endeavour to make the suspicion or charge to which she has become obnoxious as extensively known as she can.

A few days ago, in a house adjacent to ours, a

woman was screaming from a window, "O my neighbours! O Muslims! hear what this wicked man, my husband, with whom I have lived for years, and to whom I have borne children, says of me!" Then, in none of the most delicate terms, she proceeded to explain the charge brought against her by him; while he contented himself by interrupting her with the information that the Kádee should soon set her at liberty.

In the middle and lower classes, it is not unusual for a man to be betrothed to a *little child*; and it often happen that the child, on seeing him, refuses to accept him as her husband. In such a case the man is compelled by law either to divorce the girl, or to maintain her for a certain time, limited or extended according to circumstances. Sometimes such a state of things continues for several years; but the period depends much upon the disposition of the suitor or the humour of the girl. It is a sort of probation, during which the proposed husband is permitted to visit her in the presence of her parents or guardian. Her pleasure is entirely consulted; and sometimes, being won by jewels or sweetmeats, according to her lover's resources, she will profess a growing affection for him.

How strange would you think the lives of the Arab women, especially those of the lower orders! The story of one, whose early history is much the same as that of many girls in her sphere of life,

will serve as an illustration. She lost her parents when a child, and was consigned to the care of a half-sister, a sort of relation with which the East abounds. At the age of thirteen she was married to a man considerably her senior, with whom she lived two years; but she was so thoroughly discontented, that at the end of that period the man divorced her by her own desire. Thus, at fifteen years of age she was seeking a second husband; and being rather pretty, and gracefully formed, she early attracted the notice of several men, but received most favourably the attentions of a remarkably plain boy, who had been brought up by the half-sister I have mentioned. He possessed a proud spirit, and an unconquerably bad temper; and under all these disadvantageous circumstances the elder sister naturally objected to his proposal. When, however, the *divorcée's* term of single life according to the Muslim law had expired, the elder girl was called from home for a few days: the devoted lovers took advantage of her absence, and she found them one on her return. Although, as many have shown before, marriage is far from being here an indissoluble tie, yet it is a very serious step; and this miserable child had linked herself to wretchedness little understood in England. For a short time, things wore a decent aspect: the husband hired a coffee-shop, and took her home two piastres per day: but by degrees he neglected her, giving

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her no means of support ; and at the end of two years, and just after the death of their only child, he deserted her. She was then about seventeen years of age, a year ago.

A young man who had for some months regarded her with admiration, and to whom she had given many opportunities of seeing her unveiled, came boldly forward, and proposed to her ; asserting that he could induce her husband (if he could find him) to divorce her, by paying him a sum of money. She did not receive his proposal with indifference ; but did not absolutely consent to the plan of bribing her husband. Her lover endeavoured to secure her affection by making her presents from time to time ; all of which she condescendingly received ; and matters went on thus for a month, at the end of which, most unexpectedly, the husband returned. Scarcely had he passed a night in his house when some kind friend informed him that he was not the happiest of men, and directed his attention to his wife's admirer. Fickle as you must acknowledge her character, or rather her conduct, to have been, there was a pulse in her heart which beat yet true to her husband ; and never, but under circumstances of heartless desertion, would she for a moment have entertained a preference for his good-looking rival. Now he had returned, and although I never heard that he gave any explanation of his conduct, he was with her, and that was enough :

she loved him better than all the world besides. For some weeks he persecuted her most unmercifully ; and in vain she protested that she preferred him before all others ; he and his family reviled her almost incessantly, until, one day, she ventured to reply with some warmth to his invectives ; he beat her so cruelly that she rushed from her house and sought refuge with us.

I thought then the ruffian had gone too far for forgiveness. Not at all : on the following day she returned to him, only requiring from him a promise that he would not repeat his violence. This devotion on her part met with no response ; and he continued a course of torturing ill-treatment, until, in the hurry of passion, he exclaimed, “ You are divorced.” It was the *third* time he had done so, and the law of triple divorce is one of the strictest in the Muslim code. The girl by law was free. Had it been the first or the second time, he could have obliged her return, but now to become again his wife would be to renounce her religion ; and to bring upon her head the deepest disgrace. That was a time of penitence for her cruel persecutor ; and he severely regretted that he had placed it in the power of his young wife to marry his hated rival. The latter naturally came forward, believing that all circumstances now at least favoured his hopes : but her constancy triumphed. She saw her husband, and saw his sorrow, and, renouncing

every consideration but his happiness, she braved the torrent of abuse which poured forth upon her from every quarter ; the anathemas of her sister, the reproaches of her acquaintance, and, as on her bridal day, gave her whole heart to her husband. *He* was softened : she had proved to him that he had no rival in her affections, and proved it by sacrifices even he could not gainsay ; and he has become a better husband, and it is hoped a better man. He takes her home, as at first, two piastres per day ; he attends to his business, and evinces something like kindness and consideration.

How strange (to our English ideas) would have been her condition had she married her admirer. Her jealous persecutor would undoubtedly have haunted her footsteps, and perhaps have threatened her life ; for he sets a selfish value on the poor girl, which, in itself, has forged her fetters. And how much more strange is it to know that it is a common thing for a woman to marry a third—a fourth—I do not like to say how many husbands, while she might meet every day men to whom she had been attached by the same tie. There is one thing alone which can revise such a state of things—one holy influence—it is, and must be, Christianity.

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## LETTER II.

March, 1845.

SOME of my countrymen seem to be inclined to regard with approbation, in several respects, the laws and customs relating to marriage, and the separation of the sexes, as prevailing in this and other Muslim countries. I think that my brother (who is not one of the persons above alluded to) has pointed out the chief advantages resulting from this state of things. After remarking that "The respect in which trade is held by the Muslim greatly tends to enlarge the circle of his acquaintance with persons of different ranks," he adds, "freedom of intercourse with his fellow-men is further and very greatly promoted by the law of the separation of the sexes, as it enables him to associate with others, regardless of difference of wealth or station, without the risk of occasioning unequal matrimonial connexions. The women, like the men, enjoy extensive intercourse with persons of their own sex."\* Hence they enjoy a domestic quiet unknown to us, in general, in the West; and much more might doubtless be said in the way of apology for these laws and customs:

\* 'Modern Egyptians,' Part i. ch. 8.



but all the good that can possibly result from them is greatly outweighed by evil. Besides that greatest of all the abominations sanctioned by Muslim law and usage, the custom of polygamy, and the facility of divorce, which is its necessary consequence, there are innumerable minor kindred evils to be deplored. One of the worst of these, in my opinion, is the early marriage of boys.

It is a common thing to see a sweet intelligent youth, from whose manners and conversation the fairest promise may be deduced, growing up to the age of fourteen years, or perhaps fifteen, with his mind little tainted by example. When, however, he has attained those years, he is attacked by the Hareem of his father on the subject of marriage; and his mother especially urges upon her child the necessity of an early contract. The boy of course consents: there is something so manly in having his own Hareem, that he is far from being averse to the arrangement. He is married; and at once degenerates into a selfish, sensual character. No art is left untried, no means of fascination are neglected, no attainable luxury is unemployed to secure to his Hareem his exclusive attention. In some instances, after a lapse of years, the victim sobers down into a worthy husband; but more frequently he continues through life the slave of self-indulgence. The change in the powers of the mind immediately consequent upon this, can hardly be

imagined. The sharp, intelligent boy is quickly transformed into a dull, heavy blockhead. It is very generally observed that the promise given by the youth of mental excellence is rarely fulfilled by the man. It is curious that, though the Arabs are surprisingly quick in learning, at least four-fifths of their literature consist of little more than compilations. Talent generally lasts with them, but very seldom genius.

Boys, however, are never united to those who are older than themselves (I know but one instance of a young man being the husband of an elderly woman); while poor little girls are often given in marriage to men old enough to be their grandfathers. Most of these children accept their offered husbands from a feeling of duty towards the parents who have selected them. I need scarcely say how wretched in almost every case are the consequences of such unions. The case to which I have referred above (of an elderly woman married to a young man), was that of the sister of a grandee. She requested her brother to select for her a husband; he expressed some disgust at this proposal, but she became importunate, and he consented; and informed her that if she were determined on marrying, she should accept a certain person, whom he named. She objected to his selection, perhaps because the man he mentioned was very young; but he replied, that he was determined she should

accept him, or no one. The proposed husband, on receiving the communication, could only say, that he was grateful for the honour intended him ; though this, you may be sure, was far from being true. Shortly, they were married ; and the young Bey, on being introduced to his wife, found an elderly lady, who received him with much kindness, but who assured him that she had merely married him as a matter of form, that she had done so by compulsion, and that, considering the disparity in their years, she had provided for him a young and handsome Abyssinian slave, whom she desired he would consider his future wife. He believed her to be in earnest, and it is not surprising that he did so ; for though it is very unusual for a wife to act in this manner, she appeared to apologize by noticing her own years, and his youth. He accepted the Abyssinian ; and discovered, sadly too late, that the whole had been a scheme to try his allegiance. His wife has ever since requited him by taunts and revilings ; and let no one suppose that the Hareem of —— Bey can, during his tormentor's lifetime, be considered as his home.

A very prevalent cause of misery in the Hareems of the great is the custom, so common among the *grandees*, of marrying their female relations and their emancipated female slaves to persons much beneath them in rank ; for the men who are honoured by having such wives bestowed upon them

seldom fail to find themselves victims of abominable tyranny ; as Sir John Malcolm, in his delightful ‘Sketches of Persia,’ has very pleasantly shown to be the case in that country.

Another cause is the want of unanimity among the children of a Hareem in which there is a plurality of mothers. The plan of allotting a distinct suite of apartments to each wife does not separate the children of different mothers. They meet in the general saloons, in the gardens, and in the courts ; and the quarrels of children grow with them into the grave disputes of youth ; while envy and jealousy with regard to their mother’s privileges, and their own, often increase to deadly hatred. Being but *half* brothers and sisters, they have not parents in common to whom to refer their differences ; and they nurse them in their own breasts until they find some means of revenging their real or supposed wrongs. I know a great Hareem where the children of the wives and slaves are of all ages ; some of the sons are nearly forty years of age ; some have grown to man’s estate, and some are boys. The younger ones alone are perfectly at liberty in the Hareem of their father : the elder ones have their own establishments, and seldom meet ; but they are examples of envy and discord when circumstances throw them together ; and their feuds will, I doubt not, ere long give rise to very deplorable consequences.



I have not hitherto touched on one most important point, the gravest of all objections to the Hareem system : that the dignity of a great Hareem cannot be supported, nor indeed can such an establishment subsist, without slaves. In such a Hareem there must be male guardians ; and these the law requires to be eunuchs : there must also be female attendants ; and experience has often shown that, when these are free servants, the whole family is broken up, and some members of it perhaps lose their lives, in consequence of intrigues conducted by such servants. There can be no doubt but that many of the thousands of little strangers, of every shade of complexion, who are annually brought into Egypt, forget their parents and their fatherland, and, experiencing much of indulgence and consideration, contract for their possessors nearly that affection which, under happier circumstances, would have been bestowed where Heaven first directed it. That such may be the case was lately shown to me by a remarkable instance.

A Turkish woman, residing at this time in Cairo, was left a widow some years since with one son. Her establishment consisted of several slaves and servants ; and among the former was a boy who had been tenderly brought up by his mistress from a very early age, and had been emancipated. He had been carefully educated with her own son, who

holds a place under the present government, and could speak and write several languages. Ascertaining that his mistress had become straitened in her circumstances since the death of her husband, and observing that her son relaxed in his duty towards her, and neglected also to perform those offices which his situation under government required, consequently that her means of comfort were reduced and her spirit broken, bethought himself that by his own exertions these evils might be mitigated. He accordingly applied for and obtained a situation as interpreter with a man of importance, who was enabled to present him with a place under government of considerable emolument after he had served him creditably during rather more than two years. In the meantime, his mistress's circumstances had become increasingly distressing: her son had forsaken her, and her heart was well-nigh broken, when, on a happy day, her slave rushed into her house, threw himself at her feet, and earnestly begged that she would honour him by sharing his good fortune. Never was consent more cheerfully given. The happy slave purchased a handsome house, into which his mistress immediately removed; and in doing so he made but one condition, that the designation of mistress should be exchanged for that of mother. He has since married; but his adopted mother has lost nothing by this circumstance. She is, and she

will be as long as she lives, the chief lady of his household.

Such cases are not uncommon, but no argument deduced from instances of this kind can more than mitigate the horrors of a traffic which tears asunder the dearest, closest ties, and which gives a power over our fellow-creatures so often abused even to the death. Among all the many evils attending humanity in the present day, few exceed this making merchandise of our kind. It is true that England has raised her powerful voice, and stretched forth her successful arm, to preserve inviolate the home of the Western African, but much, ay, *very* much remains for her to do ere liberty will be held sacred, and the Eastern mother press her own child to her bosom, with the conviction that the tyranny of man cannot deprive her of that sweet and precious gift of God.

It often occurs to me that the blessings which we enjoy in England are very insufficiently prized until we travel in other and distant lands. What I chiefly allude to, among the blessings of England, are those which affect the people rather than the country. As far as nature is concerned, I ought not to complain of Egypt; for, with the exception of the great heat of summer, the hot winds of spring, and the occasional visits of the plague in the latter season, the climate of this country is considered by almost all who know it to be one of

the finest and most salubrious in the world. The regularity of its seasons is most remarkable; and it is seldom disturbed by any frightful natural phenomena, such as hurricanes and the like. We were, however, much alarmed early in the morning of the 21st of last month, by a severe shock of an earthquake. It was perfectly dark, when we were all awoke by tremendous shaking, accompanied by a loud rumbling noise. Our house cracked fearfully, and seemed as though set upon wheels, and rapidly shaken to and fro. Some persons thought that the shock lasted three minutes: we thought that it lasted less than one minute; of course I mean from the time that it awoke us, but I can never forget the feeling of awe which possessed me then and after the shock. The motion leaving us no room for speculation, we all lay awake, longing for the morning, and fearing that we should hear of many evil results, while we considered the miserable state of the houses in general in Cairo. The morning, however, came, and brought with it no bad news. Providentially, no person was injured further than by experiencing extreme alarm. A man and his wife, living in a neighbouring street, jumped from a first-floor window into the street, believing that if they remained in the house they should be buried in the ruins; and there, wrapped in one blanket, they remained until it became light. Whole families assembled



in the courts of their houses ; and an acquaintance of ours, an Englishman, so completely lost his presence of mind, that he could not for a long time remember whether he was in Egypt or not. No wonder : had I been, as he was, with only servants in the house, I might have been as much bewildered ; but as such occurrences promote sociability, I and my boys made ourselves as comfortable as we could, by joining company under one musquinet, feeling unspeakably the benefit of companionship. There is not on record any account of disastrous consequences from earthquakes in Egypt ; and although this is not a proof that such will never be the case, it is an argument in favour of feeling something like security. The prophecy of our blessed Lord that “ there shall be earthquakes in divers places,” was instantly in my mind when awoke by that awful shock, nor did I dare to hope that the cause for alarm would so soon and so mercifully subside.

You can hardly imagine what various scenes present themselves to one looking from the window of a house in one of the great thoroughfare-streets, such as that in which we are now living, in this most strange city of Cairo ; which, by the way, should no longer be called “ Grand Cairo :” for it is now a city of miserable ruins, interspersed with mosques, once magnificent, but now in general falling or fallen to decay, and with comparatively



few modern houses, *of which* the paltry nature of the architecture contrasts very singularly with that of the picturesque, but tottering, older dwellings among which they rise. Bridal and funeral processions very often disturb our tranquillity, the former on Mondays and Thursdays, the most propitious days for such ceremonies ; the latter, almost every day.

I have read accounts of refractory Muslim saints who have, after death, resisted being carried to any place of burial excepting one on which, it is supposed by many, they had fixed their choice. A few days since I saw a procession attending the bier of one of that most singular fraternity. Instead of the usual wailing, men were shouting and women screaming for joy, and uttering the *zagha-reet* ; while the beating of drums rendered the confusion of sounds complete. Scarcely had the hundreds following the bier passed our house, when the tide of human beings seemed checked, and in another minute rushed back with impetuosity. The saint had raised his hands, they said, and the bearers of the bier felt themselves forcibly prevented from proceeding by the way they intended. The *Welee* had first travelled east ; now he travelled west ; and we concluded that he was content. But a few hours after, the procession again passed our house ; the people running with the bier ; and men, women, and children increasing in numbers

every minute ; and I do believe that nine-tenths of the multitude believed that the bearers were supernaturally withheld from carrying the bier their own way on every occasion that they changed their course. As in the morning, so again in the afternoon, the attempt to carry their burden eastward failed ; and in nearly as short a time as before, they turned and retraced their steps. When almost opposite to our house they made a stand, and that was a moment of some uneasiness ; for it was possible that they might insist upon raising a tomb in the very thoroughfare, or even in our house. Such things have been done, and the tomb of a Welee has prevented the possibility of anything of considerable size passing through some of the principal streets of Cairo. In opening the new road to the citadel, by order of the Páshá, the tomb of a Welee was taken down, but is now being rebuilt nearly in the centre of the road ; because, it is said, the Páshá's sleep has been disturbed by the saint's nightly visitations, requiring restitution of his rights. Our fears that the restless Welee would become a neighbour, were quieted by the bearers rushing forward as if impelled by something that seemed to urge them onward. For that night we heard no more of the saint ; but on the following day we found that his bearers had had no rest but for one quarter of an hour, during which their burden was content to stay in the

tomb of his parents. During that day the same game was played as on the preceding, until towards evening, when those persons most nearly interested in the arrangement of the interment commenced the preparation of a tomb, with which they pretended that he was content.

Another uncommon funeral procession, that of Khursheed Páshá, late Governor of Sennár, passed our house a few days after that of the saint; and as it was the most remarkable of all such spectacles seen in Cairo since my arrival, I am induced to describe it to you. It was preceded by six camels, each bearing two boxes filled with corn and dates; above and between which sat the distributor, with a stick in his hand with which to drive off the crowd that pressed upon him, making as great a clamour as though they were all starving, and strange to say, the most decently dressed were the most importunate. Then followed three camels with water, and then two buffaloes to be sacrificed at the tomb, and the flesh to be divided among the poor. These practices are always observed at the funerals of rich persons in Egypt, and I believe throughout the East. About thirty reciters of the Kur-an followed next, and about the same number of sheykhs headed a large body of Turks of the middle classes, chiefly wearing the military dress. Then followed a tribe of Chaooshes, two and two, in full uniform; and after these walked about fifty

grandees of all ages. Their dresses were most picturesque ; the varieties of colour they displayed rendering the group they formed by far the most striking feature in the procession. There were among them some old men who had doubtless seldom before *walked* in the streets of Cairo. One, bent with age, and apparently blind, was leaning on a youth who seemed to be his son ; and many were much exhausted. They had all walked nearly a mile, and had to walk nearly a mile and a half farther ; the last half-mile exposed to the burning sun. But to return to the order of the procession. Some boys walked next, each bearing a Kur-an ; and they were immediately followed by a crowd of men bearing incense in silver censers, filling the streets and houses with clouds of frankincense and other perfumes ; while others, carrying sprinkling-bottles of silver, showered their sweet contents around them on the more distinguished of the spectators. Then passed the bier, the appearance of which was not unusual ; it was covered with a red figured Cashmere shawl, and borne by four men. The ladies, female slaves, and friends and attendants of the Hareem next followed, consisting of about twenty-five or thirty ladies mounted on high donkeys, and perhaps twenty slaves on ordinary donkeys, and a host on foot. All the last-mentioned screamed and wailed so loudly that the noise cannot easily be forgotten by those who have



heard as well as seen a grand funeral procession ;— the mingling of noises, the reciters of the Kur-an, the chanting-boys, and the wailing-women, occasion a deafening yell hardly to be imagined. The led horses of the grandees bore up the rear, and thus concluded a spectacle as singular as almost any which can be witnessed in the streets of Cairo.

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## LETTER III.

March, 1845.

AMONG the most singular of the customs observed in the Hareems of this country, are those which are consequent upon a death ; and I think you will be entertained by an account of what is practised in a wealthy Christian Hareem on such an occasion. The scenes which I am about to describe to you were witnessed by my kind friend, Mrs. Lieder, and I shall give you the details nearly in her own words.

A few days ago, one of the richest of the Copts residing in this city sent to Mr. Lieder requesting him to send for an English physician, his wife being dangerously ill. Our friend sent immediately, but just when his messenger had returned, a servant arrived from the Copt saying that his mistress was dead. It is thus that the Copts generally act, waiting until the patient is at the point of death before they send for medical aid.

Mrs. Lieder forthwith went to the scene of mourning, and soon after her return brought me her memoranda of the strange observances which she had there witnessed. On arriving at the house,

she says, I found the door thronged by the male friends of the master. I ascended to the apartments of the Hareem, and in doing so passed through the room in which the lady had died. Here everything was in a state of the utmost confusion; the bed and bed-clothes were left strewn about, evidently with intention; not a thing had been removed since the body had been washed and laid out. I then went into a large room, whence horrid screams and cries had assailed my ears; and there I found the corpse laid on a small bed or mattress on the floor, and covered with Cashmere shawls and richly embroidered crape veils. I was conducted to a place on the divan, near the head of the deceased: it was a dreadful sight, and the confusion and noise were most distressing. Two women were beating tambourines and singing dismal dirges, while about twenty ladies and hired wailing-women (such as we read of in the Scriptures) were crying aloud, and slapping, or rather beating themselves, keeping time with the instruments. Other women, including the slaves, were jumping, and clapping their hands, while their bodies were bent almost double. Their performances strikingly reminded me of the American Indian dances described by Mr. Catlin, expressive of nothing less than frenzy. They continued their frantic gestures until they were nearly exhausted, when a sign was made for them to sit and rest.

Then followed the most interesting and touching act of the drama. The relations sat nearest to the corpse, and each of them addressed it in turn, using every endearing expression that love or friendship could suggest. Each held in her hand a handkerchief, folded in the form of a bandelet; this was rapidly whirled round at the close of each address. All apostrophized the deceased; slaves as well as relations. One cried, "Have I not loved thee, and have not mine eyes worshipped thee?" Another, "Thou art young, my heart's treasure, my beloved! O! thou art very young to leave thy husband, and thy mother!" Another, a slave, cried, "I have made thy bread; must thou for ever leave thy poor slave? O, my mistress, will thou no longer eat what my hands may prepare?" Then cried another slave, "Have I not cooked for thee the choicest dainties? Wilt thou no longer remain with us? Canst thou leave us desolate? O! come back again, my beloved! My mistress, come back, to thy wretched slave; and she will prepare for thee sweetmeats with honey and sugar, and perfumes, and use all her skill to please thee!" This was said by a very fat old negro woman. One poor slave fainted several times, evidently from real affection combined with fatigue. It was astonishing that they could endure so much excitement and exertion of mind and body.



The mother, of course, was the chief mourner. She wore a dark blue head-veil and *tób* ;\* a pair of old trowsers formed part of the rest of her dress, and around her head, over the veil above mentioned, was wound a narrow strip of blue muslin, one of the principal insignia of mourning, as the crape hatband is in England. Her hands and feet were dyed with indigo. The mother-in-law and her sisters were in like manner disfigured. I can never forget the distracted manner in which the women of the family and the visitors conducted themselves, as, time after time, they renewed the jumping, or rather dancing and screaming, around the corpse ; how they rent their clothes, and how they kissed the corpse, and then wept, and fell down exhausted. There were present the ladies of all the principal scribes. All of them I observed to be in dark clothes ; their *tóbs*, especially, were of dark and sombre hues. Pink, and every bright colour, except blue, are considered unbecoming in the house of mourning.

Until I had been there about an hour, I could hardly find leisure to turn my eyes from the mourners, to examine the state of the apartment, which was intentionally put into the utmost disorder. All kinds of broken glass, china, and common earthenware were strewed upon the floor ;

\* The large, loose silk dress worn over the in-door apparel, and under the *habarah* in walking or riding.

and the rich Turkey carpet, and the cushions and coverings of the divans, were all turned and torn; the divan coverings being also intentionally soiled, smeared with indigo, and partly covered with bran and with strips of rag; together with broken ornaments and toys, and old books. The only thing left in its usual condition was an antique chair of dark wood inlaid with mother-of-pearl, surmounted by a canopy covered with red silk. A chair of this kind is generally found in a Copt's house; and upon it the turban is placed at bedtime. The walls were smeared with indigo;\* and I observed the form of the Coptic cross marked in several places, expressly for the occasion, and, as it appeared to me, treated with dishonour, as though the inmates of the house were enraged even against Providence.

The time now arrived when the bridal garments of the departed young woman were brought; and the mourners whose office it was to do so began to strip the dead. I found, as I had expected, that the body had been washed, and wrapped in white cotton, but nothing further had been done. All the relations now quitted the room, leaving the body to the friends and the hired women. The first article of dress in which they clad the corpse

\* All this description forcibly reminds me of the admirable story of the slave Káfoor, in 'The Thousand and One Nights.'

was a pair of rich pink satin trowsers; they then put on a pair of new yellow morocco mezz (a kind of inner slipper); after this, a lace shirt; and next a magnificent long vest (a yelek) of gold brocade. Around the waist was wound a costly Cashmere shawl, and the attire was completed by a saltah (or jacket) of sky blue satin profusely embroidered with gold, together with a new faroo-deeyeh (or kerchief) bound round the head, and a crape veil, one of those which I had first seen upon it. The face was fair and beautiful; characterized by a loveliness which is said to have cost the husband a very large dowry. The age of the deceased could not have been more than seventeen years. Her death was caused by childbirth, and this was the twelfth day from the commencement of her illness. While the corpse was being attired, the cries and exclamations were almost deafening, and those who surrounded it addressed it repeatedly, telling of the richness, beauty, and costliness of every article of dress, as each was put on. The next thing was to make the winding-sheet, which was a piece of satin interwoven with gold. In this the corpse, with its splendid and costly dress, was sewed up for burial.

The visitors, and I among them, now descended from the Hareem, and below we found a great number of high donkeys prepared for the friends and relations of the deceased. After most of them

had mounted, the plain wooden bier was brought, and placed before the entrance of the Hareem ; and the donkey-carpet upon which the deceased used to ride, and a small pillow for the head, were laid in it. The poor husband was then led forward to the bier. From the time of the death, neither he nor any of the male relations had seen the corpse. He seemed almost frantic, throwing himself upon the bier, and begging that he might be buried with his wife.

During the illness of his wife, some of the ladies of his family betook themselves to a celebrated picture of the Virgin, to address to it their prayers and complaints. This picture is in a private house, from which it is supposed it cannot be permanently removed : before it is a small table, on which candles are constantly kept burning ; and it is held in great veneration. Its pretended miraculous properties are said to have been discovered by its having been transferred to a church, and found to have returned without hands, in the course of the night after its removal, to its former place ! This wonderful picture the ladies above mentioned thought more likely than a physician to be a means of recovering their dying relation. As prayers addressed to it seemed unavailing, they had recourse to reproaches ; crying out to it, “ Do you not see the state of our dear relation ? Are you



blind? Are you deaf? Have you not power to heal her? Is your power gone? You can recover her if you will! Arouse yourself!" From this and similar language, becoming enraged, they proceeded to *beating* the picture.

I had no idea that persons of the higher class among the members of the Coptic Church, which was once so famous, and is still venerable for its antiquity, and for the firmness with which it has withstood persecutions too horrible to relate, could be in a state of darkness so deep as to behave in this absurd and shocking manner; and I grieve to tell you of it; but I do so that you may rejoice with me in the wise and energetic means which are employed in the present day to dispel it.

Of the numerous pupils attracted to the Missionary Institution, and the schools attached to it, in this city, a large proportion consists of children of the Copts. Here they and others enjoy the blessing of a liberal and Christian education. In the departments of the boys, the untiring zeal and excellent judgment of our highly respected friend the Reverend Mr. Lieder are in constant exercise in directing the native teachers, and labouring with them, with a devotion to which I imagine there are few parallels; while, in the female department, our dear friend Mrs. Lieder, whose life is one of extraordinary activity, and of most extensive be-

nevolence, performs the duties of the like superintendence—duties requiring no small share of tact and knowledge, with very remarkable and gratifying success.

The Coptic Institution, to which the attention of Mrs. Lieder is principally directed, sends forth soundly educated young men to become members of the priesthood of their national Church, and has been distinguished by the high approbation of the Patriarch. Incalculable good may hence be expected to arise; for the Coptic priesthood is, in general, lamentably degraded by ignorance and superstition. In the Institution above mentioned are, at present, twenty-five pupils. Seventeen of these are boarders, who are respectably clad, and most comfortably lodged, and fed. In the boys' day-school attached to it, the average number of pupils attending is one hundred and twenty; composed of Christians, Jews, and Muslims; and in the girls' school, one hundred and twenty-five. Three hundred girls have left since the year 1835 (when the school was first opened), able to read and write, and, if necessary, to earn their bread by embroidery and by other kinds of needlework; and, above all, having heard, and learned by heart, the important truths of Christianity. These girls are of different religions, like the boys.

It is interesting to observe the different countenances of Easterns of different countries in that

overflowing schoolroom. Next to the well-known features of the Jewess, those of the Syrians are the most remarkable : so peculiar are the countenances of the latter, that after two were pointed out to me, I was able to separate others from those around them. In general, the Syrian girl has a high intelligent forehead, with arched eye-brows ; large and long-shaped, soft, dark eyes ; a fair complexion, a delicately formed aquiline nose, and small, pretty mouth. The face is long, with such a grave and sensible and thoughtful expression, that the little girl seems as though she carried an old head on young shoulders. There is no dimpled prettiness about the little Syrians ; but a sort of dignified beauty, which, when matured, at the age of perhaps sixteen, is very striking : and the Syrian women retain their youthful appearance longer than any other Easterns that I know. Delicacy being their peculiar personal characteristic, they strangely contrast with the swarthy Arab child, whose good-tempered expressive mouth, and perfectly regular white teeth, comprise perhaps her only personal charms. The children of the Muslims are often sadly disfigured by weak eyes, the diseased state of which is not induced, but increased, by the most absurd superstitions.

It appears to me that most of the thousands of infants who lose their sight or drop into their graves on the very threshold of existence are rather

the victims of superstition than of climate. For example, the child of an Arab girl for whom we felt interested lost his sight from an attack of ophthalmia, induced by cold, and increased by the mother's having bandaged up his eyes on the first symptom appearing, and preserved them bandaged and unwashed until they shrunk and withered in their sockets. I heard nothing of the disease having attacked the poor baby until his eyes were dark : and then it was brought to show me. It was most distressing to look upon that dear infant, and see that his Heavenly Father's best gift to his little body, that one most productive of enjoyment, was hopelessly and entirely lost. In another week, I heard that the dear child was dead ; and I heard it with feelings of unmixed thankfulness to God. What had been his prospects here ? Of Muslim parents, he would have been educated in a false religion, mentally and physically dark, to grope his way in poverty through childhood, with life's struggle before him, the child of oppressed parents who could rarely afford to lighten his burden by their presence ; lonely, blind, and miserable. When I hear of the death of children under circumstances such as these, I always rejoice.

“ Of such are the Kingdom of Heaven.”

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## LETTER IV.

April, 1845.

You may naturally be curious to know how the ladies of Cairo amuse themselves and their friends during those long visits which occupy nearly the whole of a day. When not engaged in eating and drinking, the pipe serves to many, in some measure, as a pastime, and they tell trifling anecdotes, of which I shall here give you a specimen or two.

It is a custom of merchants to meet at coffee-shops, there to talk over the news of the day, to tell of their troubles, and sometimes of their successes; and the desire of appearing in better circumstances than they are, is often evident when they are secure of being in the company only of those of similar occupation. A braggadocio of this description was one night talking of his house, his slaves, his goods, and everything but his wives; for it is not etiquette to mention them in the presence of another man; and was overheard by a beggar-woman who resorted nightly to that coffee-shop to ask alms, and who was standing concealed from the view of its inmates, until the tone of the

conversation changed. She then came forward, asked charity, obtained a few paras as usual from each person, and retired to her hiding-place until it became dark, when she followed the merchant first mentioned to his house. It was situated in a miserable lane ; and was as ruined and wretched as its neighbourhood. Having remarked it sufficiently, she hastily changed in some measure the manner of arranging her maláyeh (the enveloping chequered blue and white drapery which corresponds with the black silk habarah of the better classes), and assuming an altered gait, she approached the merchant's door, and asked admittance. His wife opened it, and the beggar whiningly entreated shelter for the night. The wife called to her husband to ask his permission, and he replied, "Admit her:" therefore the beggar entered, and found herself in the same apartment with the object of her inquiry. Nothing could denote the reverse of the man's boasted wealth more than the interior of his house ; scanty and dirty furniture, and the absence of every indication of even comfort, met the eye and engaged the attention of his treacherous guest. His supper was prepared by his wife, who, besides himself, alone resided in his house : but the supper was only enough for two ; therefore the merchant desired his wife to go to the nearest market, and purchase something for the beggar, giving her

ten paras (rather more than a halfpenny of our money), to lay out for the purpose. The beggar-woman supped, and slept in the house, and on the following morning asked for breakfast before she departed; when the merchant sent his willing wife to the market as on the previous night, and gave her the same sum of money to expend. The beggar breakfasted, and went her way; and at night she was at the coffee-shop as usual. As soon as the unsuspecting merchant took his seat, and with an air of great importance filled his pipe from a tobacco-purse embroidered with gold, arranged his dress to the best advantage, and called for coffee, she accosted him in the following words: "Can you tell me of a merchant who boasts in the coffee-shops of his wealth, of the number of his slaves, and of the richness of his merchandise, but whose house is as the dwelling of a scavenger, and whose property is the wind? I can tell you," continued she, "that last night he entertained a stranger, and gave his wife ten paras to provide her supper, and ten to procure her breakfast this morning." "Are you that woman?" asked the merchant in much confusion. "Yes," replied she, "and you are that merchant." It was enough, and I imagine that the poor boaster never again contributed his company to those who had heard with envy of his riches, and now gloried in his disgrace. It seems that the woman designed to steal; and

being disappointed, adopted this method of revenge. This was related to me as a true story, well attested. One more will perhaps be as much as you will desire.

A man went to the market to sell a calf, and a company of thieves, forty in number, with their chief, agreed to buy it under the name of a kid. So their chief came to the owner of the calf, and asked him, "Wilt thou sell this kid for fifteen piastres?" The owner replied, "It is a calf, not a kid." Then ten of the thieves said, "O sheykh, it is a kid, not a calf: art thou blind?" and they went away. Then came ten others of them, who offered him fourteen piastres, each of them saying, "It is a kid, not a calf;" he replying "It is a calf, not a kid: are ye blind?" So the man was perplexed, and he looked at the calf, and felt its head, and its back, and its tail. One party of the thieves after another continued to come to him, each lessening the price; but he would not sell it. Then their chief came to him, and said to him, "Wilt thou sell this kid for seventeen piastres?" but he refused. And the chief said, "I have guests with me, and I have offered thee more than the kid is worth, because I desired to slaughter it for them." But still he would not. And the chief said, "Wilt thou sell it for twenty?" He answered, "I will, on the condition that thou give me its tail." And he replied "Granted." So



the man went with them, and he took its tail, after it had been slaughtered, and gave it to a carpenter, to knock into it a hundred nails. He then took the tail, and having disguised himself in the dress of a woman, went to the abode of the forty thieves after sunset. And he whispered to the chief of the thieves, and said, "My husband desires to take another wife in addition to me ; and he has a jar full of pieces of gold ; those I wish you to take from him, that he may give up the idea of marrying another wife ; so send thy people to take it, and remain thou with me lest their object should be discovered." And he sent them. Now there was in the house a great pulley, and a rope hanging down ; so the owner of the calf said, "What is this?" The chief answered, "It is a swing, with which we amuse ourselves." "By thy life," said the owner of the calf, "put thyself in it, and show me how thou swingest." So he put himself in it, and the other drew him up. He then pulled out the tail of the calf, and said to him, "Is this the tail of a calf, or the tail of a kid?" And he beat him severely, and departed. Presently the thieves, his companions, returned, and found him intoxicated without wine : and when he recovered, they said unto him, "What hath happened to thee?" He answered, groaning, "The woman is the owner of the calf ;" and he related to them the story : on hearing which they said, "If we see

him again, we will contrive means to slay him." He then said to them, "Bring me a physician." And they brought him one, who, when he saw him, said to him, "Thou hast been beaten: I will cure thee; but thou canst not be cured save by forty things, from forty different shops; and he wrote forty papers, for each of the thieves one, and on each paper he wrote, "An accursed, the son of an accursed. Into whose hands soever of the druggists this paper shall fall, if he do not buffet the bearer and spit in his face, . . . ." He then gave the papers to the thieves, desiring them to bring him the drugs; and when they were gone, he took forth the tail of the calf, and said to the patient, "Is this the tail of a calf, or the tail of a kid?" and he beat him again, until he was nearly dead, and left him. And when his companions had received the buffetings, and the spittings in their faces, they came to him, and found him like one dead; and when he had recovered, he told them what had befallen him, and that the physician was the owner of the calf. They, also, told him what had befallen to them. He then said to them, "Take me forth into the desert, put me in a tent, and range yourselves round it; and whatsoever you see coming, whether it be a woman, or a physician, or a dog, or a cat, or a kite, be sure that it is the owner of the calf." So they took him

forth, put him in a tent, and ranged themselves round him. But as to the owner of the calf, he watched their motions at a distance, and knew them when he saw them round the tent from afar. And there passed by him a man, to whom he said, "Take this piece of gold, as the price of thy blood, and go to the company sitting round that tent, and say to them, 'I am the owner of the calf.' But beware lest they overtake thee, for if they do, they will slay thee, in which case this piece of gold will be the penalty for thy blood." And the man did so, and fled: and they all pursued him. And while the thieves were pursuing him, the owner of the calf came to the tent, and producing the tail to the sick man; said to him, "Is this the tail of a calf, or the tail of a kid?" And he beat him until his soul almost issued forth from his body; and he went away. And when the party returned, they found him, as it were, at the point of death. He told them what had befallen him, and said to them, "Prepare me a tomb, and put me into it alive, and give out that you have buried me, that the owner of the calf may persecute me no longer." So they put him in a tomb, and sat around him conversing until the sixth hour of the night, when they departed to their abode. The owner of the calf then came to him and said, "Is this the tail of a calf, or the tail of a kid?" The sick man said to him

sighing, "Even in the tomb dost thou come to me?" He replied, from the Excellent Book, "Verily the punishment of the world to come shall be more grievous:" and was about to beat him again; but he said to him, "I make a vow of repentance to thee." And he accepted his vow, and the man fulfilled it well; beginning by paying him ten times the value of the calf.

Being in a humour for telling stories, I add one with which I was amused a few days ago, during a visit much more agreeable than are those of my Eastern friends.

It is seldom a novelty to a European to make a present; but it is a curious novelty to observe the manner in which a gift is received by an Eastern, in many cases. A distinguished gentleman, who had spent some years in Egypt, being on the point of returning to Europe, asked the advice of a judicious friend of ours with regard to the presents he should give to those with whom he had been particularly concerned, and whom he had already handsomely remunerated. After the consultation, when everything appeared to our friend to be satisfactorily arranged, it was proposed that in addition to the gift of a gun and a bag of dollars to a camel proprietor, some silver bullets should be cast, and presented with the gun, as a polite accompaniment. Our friend assured him that the delicacy which suggested such a present would be neither understood



nor appreciated by the "Sheykh of the camels ;" \* and that if he were resolved to add the value of the bullets, it would be better to do so in the form of money. It was, however, a favourite project ; and the proposer was not disposed to abandon it : the bullets were cast, and the traveller waited with his presents at the house of our friend, who desired the attendance of those who were to receive his bounty. The Sheykh of the camels arrived first, and when the usual salutations had passed, he was presented with his gun. He received it without one word of acknowledgment, and turned it about and examined it as though he had been making a purchase. At length he said, "I have a gun ; my servant always carries it ; it is a better one than this : shall he bring it up to show it to you ?" This our friend forbade. The bullets were then given him. "Silver bullets !" said he ; "Mohammad Aleé Páshá uses leaden ones. What is the use of silver bullets ?" "They are only," it was replied, "intended as a handsome accompaniment to such a gun ; they are not to be used in charging it ; and if you do not like them, you can turn them at any time into money." This latter argument the Sheykh understood ; and he weighed the bullets in his hand ; but

\* Every trade and every class of artizans in Egypt has its Sheykh, or superior, by whom all its followers are controlled : thus there is a Sheykh even of the dustmen, and a troop of camels in like manner has its Sheykh.

no word of thanks escaped him. Then the dollars were presented to him. Those he took out singly ; he turned over every coin, counted them in the presence of his benefactor, and examined them closely. Here our friend's patience was exhausted : he had hoped that, at least, when the dollars were given, the Sheykh would express his gratitude ; and he felt severely the mortification his generous companion must experience in such a disappointment of his expectations. " You shall now," he said, " have a reckoning with *me*. When this gentleman engaged your camels for such a journey, what did you charge him, and what did you gain by him for such and such an excursion ?" The Sheykh knew that he was dealing with a just and experienced person, and felt obliged to answer him with truth. The calculation was made ; and it was found that the Sheykh had profited immensely by his employer. Our friend then insisted upon his making a proper acknowledgment, and leaving the house ; and under these circumstances, knowing that this point was determined on by one possessing considerable influence here, he consented, and gave his tardy thanks.

It is a curious fact, and one not to be disputed, that this man was exceedingly pleased with his present ; and was only endeavouring to gain every piastre he could from one who had long submitted patiently to his exactions. He only acted as most

Arabs would have acted under the same circumstances.

The system of giving a present at the conclusion of an engagement with an Arab is a good one ; because the hope of a backsheesh has the effect of preserving civil manners, and often fair dealing, and such a hope ought not to be disappointed.

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## LETTER V.

May, 1845.

MY residence here occasions my having often friendly intercourse with persons who, according to Eastern etiquette, I must call ladies; persons born of Christian parents, and reared through childhood in the Christian profession; but now of the faith of Mohammad. I allude to those unfortunate beings who, torn from their native countries, are brought hither as slaves. One thing with respect to them, and common to them and the Memlooks, or male white slaves, very much surprises me; it is this: that they are generally far more bigoted than the rest of their co-religionists. In other respects, many of them seem to me still to have amiable dispositions, which make me to mourn the more for their unhappy lot. But it is not so with the Memlooks, among whom I frequently hear of beings more like infernal spirits than men; monsters in cruelty and in every imaginable vice. There is also another class, very numerous in this country, somewhat similarly circumstanced; of whom some are deserving of much pity, while others cannot be too severely condemned. By the former, I mean



those children of Christians, who, having early lost their parents here by death or desertion, have been easily induced to change their religious profession, and some of whom are perhaps sincere in calling themselves Muslims. Of those who have become apostates after having attained to years of discretion, many are persons of the vilest character, as you might naturally imagine ; in their assumed bigotry far surpassing those who are Muslims from their birth ; and behaving to their respectable Christian relations with the most abominable arrogance and tyranny. I will give you an example.

A renegade, originally an Eastern Christian, who is living in great favour with the Government, had been expecting for some time the arrival of a nephew from Syria, who left him years before, and had never heard of his apostacy. On his arrival his uncle received him with much show of affection. After conversing with him for some time, the uncle confessed his change of religion ; but assured his nephew that many and great benefits had followed his profession of the faith of el Islám, recounting the advantages of his position ; and concluding by conjuring him to follow his example. No argument, however, availed ; for the young man steadily assured him that his religion was dearer to him than any other consideration ; that no temptation should induce him to renounce it ; and that, with the help of God, he would welcome poverty while he pos-

sessed the consolations of a Christian. The uncle finding him inexorable, and firmly resolving to subdue, if possible, what he styled an obstinate and rebellious spirit, had recourse to stratagem. Having desired his nephew to take refreshment and repose, he repaired to several of his especial Muslim friends, and collecting them in a neighbouring mosque, he told them to wait there until he should send his nephew to call one of them by name, when he begged that they would seize him, on the ground of his temerity in entering a mosque, being a Christian, and compel him, on pain of death, to renounce the faith of his fathers: "Use any means," said he, "however violent: raise a popular tumult if necessary; and do not release him until he shall have professed himself a Muslim." Having given these directions, he returned to his house; and after describing the mosque to his nephew, he desired him to enter it, and call a certain person, mentioning him by name, saying that his uncle desired to speak with him. The young man accordingly repaired to the mosque; but, arriving at the door, he felt alarmed; for he saw several persons within the doorway, who, in their anxiety to perform the bidding of his uncle, overshot the mark, and beckoned to him eagerly. He had but one moment for consideration, and that proved sufficient; he apprehended that his life was in danger, and fled. Threading his way through

intricate streets, he reached a convent. Here he threw himself at the feet of the first person he met belonging to the place, and briefly told his story. This person conducted him to the presence of the superior and others, to whom he related all that had occurred, assuring them that he believed his life would be sacrificed if he returned to his uncle, determined as he was, at all hazards, to preserve his Christian profession. Thus resolved, he entreated them to give him some employment in the convent; to which they replied, that all the situations were adequately filled, therefore they could not grant his request, unless he would undertake to become a scullion. "On my head," answered the young Christian, in token of his readiness and fidelity; and he repaired to the kitchen, and thankfully applied himself to his new duties. A pious man, of some influence, residing in the convent, remarked the young stranger with deep interest, and after he had performed for one fortnight his duties in a station so ill-suited to his birth and expectations, succeeded in obtaining for him a lucrative place of trust, to which he at once removed him. This anecdote was related by one intimately acquainted with the circumstances of the young man.

The occurrence above related happened long before the period when the present Sultán, yielding to the remonstrances of the Christian powers of

Europe, exempted from the penalty of death all persons who, having been originally Christians or Jews, and having become Muslims, returned to their first faiths ; therefore, if the young man whom I have mentioned had complied with the desire of his uncle, he could not have professed himself again a Christian without losing his life, unless recommended to the notice of the Páshá.

The mildness of Mohammad 'Alee with reference to religion, in cases with respect to which the law is severe and cruel in the utmost degree, is, in my opinion, his best quality. I could mention more than one instance in which, long ago, he forbade the execution of the sentence of the law upon persons who had been Muslims from their birth, and had become professed Christians. In cases of a different kind, in which religion has been concerned, he has also signalized himself by his moderation, or, if you like so to call it, by his enlightened and wise and conciliatory policy. While the Sultan's government has been insolently interposing every imaginable obstacle in the way of the erection of our church at Jerusalem, the foundations of a noble English church have been laid at Alexandria with the ready permission of Mohammad 'Alee, and with the Turkish law directly opposed to it. The latter church will, it is said, be a very remarkable building. The style is said to be chiefly Byzantine ; but the general character rather like that of ancient Greece and Italy. Its architect is Mr. Wild, an



artist well known in England, who has been for nearly three years improving himself in his art by the study of Arabian architecture in this country; and good judges here have formed very high expectations of the results of his late investigations.

With regard to Mohammad 'Alee's religious toleration, I should observe that you can hardly conceive the hatred which it draws upon him from the Muslims in general. Their enmity to the Christians and Jews has much increased during the last few years; apparently roused to indignation at witnessing so many European innovations adopted by Turks and Memlooks in the service of the government. Occasionally it manifests itself in a manner truly ridiculous. You will scarcely believe that when Dr. Wolff was in this country, and had published some placards exhorting the Muslims to relinquish their false faith, and bestowing (in their opinions) some very disrespectful epithets upon their prophet, the principal 'Ulama held a secret council on the subject, and made him the object of a kind of mock trial, he not being present. The majority decided that sentence of death should be passed upon him for blasphemy; but a few of the less fanatical prevailed upon them to commute this sentence, and to decree that he should be flogged and banished. They knew that their decree could not be executed. This is a secret history, which I have received from a high authority.

## LETTER VI.

May, 1845.

I TOLD you that a great marriage, which I had been invited to attend, had been put off: the preparations for it have now been commenced, and my invitation has been renewed. Some of the observances usual on the occasion of such a marriage can be witnessed only by females, the scene being the interior of the Hareem; the scenes of others are accessible only to men. Though I am obliged for a short time to defer the description of the former, I need not do the same with respect to the latter; and having, among my brother's notes, an ample account of the public ceremonials observed at one of the grandest of the marriages that have been celebrated in this city during a period of many years, I shall extract from it what I think most likely to interest you. The festival about to be described was previous to the marriage of a sister of Ahmad Páshá, a nephew of the Viceroy; and lasted nine days. Mohammad 'Alee presented to Ahmad Páshá, on this occasion, three thousand purses, equivalent to about fifteen thousand pounds; and to the bridegroom, Mukhtár Bey, who had been

educated in Paris, and had lately been appointed President of the Council of State, one thousand purses, or five thousand pounds.

The scene of the festivities was the garden of the Ezbekeeyeh. It being then the season of the inundation, the large space called Birket et Ezbekeeyeh, which is of an irregular form, nearly half a mile in length, and about a third of a mile in breadth, was filled with water; and the water was unusually high. The back of the palace of Ahmad Páshá overlooks this space, which is now no longer a lake; the soil having been raised, and planted with avenues of trees. A platform of wood, supported by boats, and surrounded by little flags, to the staves of which were attached cords, with numerous lamps suspended to them, was moored about half-way between the centre of the lake and the palace. This platform was designed as a stage for fireworks; and five guns were placed upon it, and two more on the shore. The guns were fired frequently during the day-time, and more frequently during the display of the fireworks at night. There were several boats on the lake for hire; and many tents, for the sale of coffee, sweetmeats, &c., were erected on the narrow spaces between the water's edge and the surrounding houses, as well as a few swings and whirligigs. The shores of the lake, and the way leading from it to the front of the palace of Ahmad Páshá, were crowded all the day;

and more especially was the palace itself, which, with the exception of a few apartments, was thrown open to the public. In the court of the palace, where twelve chandeliers (two of them very large, but not handsome) were suspended, and which was covered over with red tent-cloths, &c., for shade, musicians, dancing-men, swordsmen, and others, amused the assembled crowds during the day; and refreshments, consisting of sweetmeats, coffee, sherbet, &c., were occasionally served to the people in the public rooms, high and low; for even the meanest of the people had free access; the Páshá reserving only a few rooms for himself and his friends. But the chief festivities were in the evening.

“I spent an hour (says my brother) on the shore of the lake in the evening of the first day, to see the fireworks. The place was excessively crowded. There were numerous benches and stools of palm-sticks, and strips of matting, placed along the water’s edge, by the kahwegees (or keepers of the coffee-booths); as soon as a person sat on one of these, a cup of coffee was brought to him, and if he refused to take it he was not allowed to retain his seat, unless he were a person of the higher orders. Several mesh’als (or cressets) were stuck in the ground to light the company; and numbers of men were going about with cakes, nuts, and various other eatables, and with sweet drinks and water.



The scene was strikingly picturesque and lively. The fireworks chiefly consisted of rockets, which were discharged one at a time, at short intervals ; so that they were not very remarkable ; but they had a pretty appearance, issuing from the bosom of the lake. The seven guns were occasionally fired one after another.

“ From the lake I proceeded to the palace, pushing my way through dense crowds. Numerous lamps in addition to two large chandeliers, were hung in the street before the palace ; and the street there was covered over like the court. The court I found thronged with people, chiefly of the lower classes. A large ring was formed round a group of dancing-men ; but I could not get near enough to see them. All the public apartments also were crowded with persons of every class, and in every variety of picturesque attire, from the richest to the meanest. At the door of one room I was stopped by a sentry, and told that there were only Europeans within. I found it convenient to assert my right to enter, and was admitted. Here were but a few persons, mostly Greeks, several of whom were females ; some in the ordinary European dress, and others in the male costume of the Turks, which they had put on in the hope of their being mistaken for boys, as it is uncommon for females in the East to be in the company of men, or even to go out at night ; but their sex was too evident.

“ From the windows of this room I had a good view of what was going on in the court. A military band played several European airs remarkably well ; and then a group of native musicians (ala-teeyeh) played some of their own airs, occasionally with the accompaniment of the voice ; but there was such a confusion of noises in the court that we could not very plainly hear them. These were succeeded by dancers, not pleasing substitutes for the dancing-girls, whose performances had been strictly interdicted between three and four months before, and many of whom, refusing to profess repentance of their dissolute lives, had been banished to Isna, in Upper Egypt. The dancers on this occasion were not the khawals, or common dancing-men of Cairo, but of a class whose dancing, dress, and appearance were nearly the same, and who differed from the khawals in little more than their appellation, which is gink. Their effeminate profession, dress, manners, and performances rendered them disgusting objects to me, and, I hope, to many others among the spectators. The gink are generally Greeks, Turks, Armenians, or Jews. In the case which I am describing, they were mostly Armenians, and about six danced at a time. They wore a tight vest, with a loose kind of petticoat, forming a compound of male and female attire, and had long hair in most instances hanging down the back in numerous plaits, and decked with the

little glittering ornaments of gold generally worn by the Egyptian women of the middle and higher orders, and called *safa*. They used castagnettes of brass ; and their dancing was, in general, similar in every respect to that of the *ghawázee*, or common dancing-girls ; but occasionally they performed pirouettes and other exercises.

“ Meanwhile, a buffoon who is a regular servant of the *Páshá*, dressed in a fantastical manner, and wearing a high, pointed red cap, gaudily ornamented with tinsel and bells, amused the company with ridiculous drolleries. He and several other persons, some of whom were of the meanest and dirtiest of the people, bore torches. The buffoon came up to the room of the Europeans. In this room refreshments of various kinds, liqueurs, sherbet, coffee, &c., were served to the company. The *áláteeyeh*, who had played in the court, also came up, and performed a concert of instrumental and vocal music. The buffoon accompanied and marred their music with his castagnettes, then sat down in the lap of an old musician, danced with his back towards the females in a very insulting manner, and performed a variety of other extravagant actions.

“ At the same time, there were performances of a different kind in the court. A company of *mohabbazeen* (or low comedians) acted a farce, exhibiting the troubles of a hen-pecked husband.

This unfortunate person, who was very fully clothed, first danced about the arena with a drawn sword. The player who personated his wife, who was a man in female attire, and to whom I must apply the feminine pronoun, came into the ring with a swaggering gait, and desired him to give her his sword, which he refusing to do, she scolded and screamed, beating her face, and then his, and thus obtained what she wanted. In the same manner she obliged him to strip off almost every article of his clothing one by one, and at last, enraged by her conduct, he beat her till she died. This foolish farce, I thought, might probably be too appropriate at a fête in celebration of the approaching marriage of a man newly elevated to rank with a woman of much higher condition; for generally in cases of this kind among the Turks, the husband is the slave of his wife. After this, a man with a lighted torch to represent a tail, ran round upon his hands and knees several times, within the ring. Such were the silly performances on the first night of this festival; these, at least, were the principal performances from sunset till past midnight. The dancers, &c. continued all the night, as well as all the day. The Páshá entertained a private party every evening during this period of rejoicing, but did not partake of the repast with them.

“The performances of the second night, and the fireworks, were so little different from those of the



first, that I need not describe them. Some of the Páshá's pipes were brought to the visitors in the room appropriated to Europeans, and refreshments served as before. The buffoon, this night, was dressed as a Frank, but seemed to be ashamed of his disguise, for he was less lively.

“On the third night, after the usual performances of the gink, a háwee, or performer of slight-of-hand tricks, amused the company. The chief of his juggling performances was the putting a number of slips of white paper into a saucepan placed on a boy's head, and then taking them out dyed of various colours. No pipes were brought to the Europeans' room this night, because one of the mouth-pieces, which were all very costly, had been stolen the night before, though evidently not by one of the visitors, for it was afterwards found in a room to which the Europeans had not access. Refreshments, however, were served as on the preceding nights, and more attention was given to amuse the company in this room. A military band with the ordinary Egyptian instruments, came up, and played and sang several native airs; the buffoon accompanying them with his castagnettes and drolleries. They were succeeded by a Turkish band, whose plaintive music was pleasing, but tame and poor after that of the Egyptians. Then a party of hired native musicians performed for nearly an hour, and in the best style.

“A full military band, meanwhile, played European airs in the court, and after they had finished, a farce was performed, the subject of which was the miseries of a man with two wives. In the better parts of this, there was nothing worthy of description ; in the worse, there was a scene which made me quit the palace in disgust.

“A rocket, during the third night, set fire to a part of Ahmad Páshá's palace ; but did little injury. The boats and platform which composed the stage for the fireworks were therefore removed nearly to the middle of the lake on the morning of the fourth day. In the course of the next night, a silly farce was performed in the palace. The military band then played European airs, after which was a mock sword-fight, between a man and a boy, who aimed their blows too obviously at each other's shields ; and another between two men ; and after this a concert of Egyptian music by hired performers.

“On the fifth night, the performances in the court of the palace consisted of nothing more than a stupid play, and the dances of the gink ; but the instrumental and vocal music of the *áláteeyeh* afforded better amusement in the room appropriated to the European visitors. In the course of this night, a little boy coming into the court, and seeming to be struck with the utmost astonishment at the number of lamps, probably having never seen

anything of the kind before, expressed his wonder by a very loud exclamation. A Turkish captain, offended at his innocent ejaculations, seized the poor little fellow, and gave him a severe flogging; and a private soldier struck him with the butt-end of his musket; but Ahmad Páshá, coming down into the court while this was being done, and inquiring and learning the cause, immediately ordered that the Turk should be flogged with double severity, called out to the other soldiers to take warning by his example, and gave several saadeeyehs (little coins each of the value of about ten-pence of our money) to the poor child, who would doubtless have willingly submitted to a flogging every day for such a compensation.

“On the sixth day, a rope for dancers was fixed in a wide space in the way leading from the lake to the palace of Ahmad Páshá. There were two performers here this day, a woman, and a boy about fourteen years of age; both of the class of the Ghugar, or Ghujar, which is the name given in Egypt to Gipsies. They performed twice in the day, and dense crowds assembled to view them. The rope was about eighteen feet from the ground, and the horizontal part of it very short, about twelve feet. The woman, who was profusely clad, in old, but gaudy things, and unveiled, like all the gipsy-women of Egypt, performed first, but merely walked along the rope, very slowly and timidly,

supporting herself by holding the balancing pole, and resting one end of it upon the ground. The boy ascended immediately after, and did nothing surprising.

“Many of the idlers in the neighbourhood of the Ezbekeeyeh were drawn off from the scene of the festivities this day by the arrest of a Copt (who had always professed himself a Christian) for having employed a number of fikees in his house to perform a recitation of the Kur-an. He exculpated himself by asserting that he had been a Muslim in his heart for fourteen years, but had feared to incur the enmity of his relations, by avowing himself such. A white turban was put upon his head, instead of the black one which he had been accustomed to wear, and he was sent to the citadel, as is usual in cases of the kind ; thence to the Kádee, to make an open profession of his faith ; and back to the Citadel, to receive a dress. On such an occasion, the apostate is preceded by musicians with drums and hautboys, and by a number of schoolboys, who cry as they go along, ‘God aid the religion of El-Islám ! God destroy the religion of the infidels !’—This morning also, an old wall on the shore of the lake of the Ezbekeeyeh, shaken by the firing of the guns, fell upon four men, one of whom was killed beneath its ruins.

“At the palace, in the evening of this day, a khowal, or Egyptian dancing-man, performed and



outdid the gink, who danced at the same time in another part of the court. This man's performances were chiefly athletic, leaping through a hoop, &c. He stood on the shoulders of another man, who walked about with him for several minutes; then, still borne in the same manner, he carried a boy in his arms. Next he formed the support of a pile of five boys and men, whom, after two or three minutes, he threw down. But he excited most surprise by sustaining, apparently with his teeth, a weight of about sixty or seventy pounds. This was a cylinder of wood, with four circular plates of iron, forming part of the machine called *nórag*, which is used in Egypt for threshing wheat and cutting the straw. But while one of these iron plates was between his teeth, that next to it rested upon the top of his head. The full military band played European airs again; and a smaller military band performed native airs, with the instruments of the country.

“On the seventh night a farce was performed, which was rather tedious, the scenes being little more than the contract for the wife, and the bridal procession conducted in the ordinary manner of the country. To make up for the want of humour, the actors threw crackers about every minute, and ended by dancing in a ridiculous manner. Afterwards, a peasant displayed his skill in balancing tall mesh'als or cressets; one with a single recep-

tacle for fire, and of the common size ; another with five such receptacles ; and a third with only one, but of more than twice the usual length. These he supported on his forehead.

“ On the eighth night, which was the last of the festivities at the palace, the performances were more silly, and more unworthy of description than any of those of the preceding nights. I therefore pass them over in silence. But I have yet to describe the zeffeh, or procession of the bride to the house of the bridegroom, which took place on the ninth day, Thursday, the day most approved for such an event.

“ It is usual, in cases of this kind, for the procession to follow a circuitous route, through several of the larger streets of the metropolis, and particularly through the main street of the city. In the present case, the procession, on quitting the palace, turned to the right, it being esteemed unlucky to turn first to the left, and after winding through some streets, made a circuit round the lake and its environs. It then passed through the part where most of the Franks reside, and, having proceeded thence just outside the original limits of the city, on the west and south, entered the main street by the great gate called Báb Zuweyleh. It had to pass through the greater part of the city to arrive at the bridegroom’s house. I had been informed that it would pass through the main street about

an hour before noon ; and I went thither an hour earlier than the expected time ; but I had to wait six hours before it arrived at the place where I sat.

“ The leader of the procession was the chief buffoon, on horseback, with a pointed silver cap, belonging to the treasury. He gravely saluted the spectators, turning to the right and left, as he passed along, like the Kádee, and other great men ; and occasionally performed the same absurd actions as the false bearded fool in the processions of the Kisweh and Mahhmil ; such as pretending to write judicial decisions, &c. Next were four men, in ample scarlet robes, of the kind called benish, each mounted on a camel, and beating a pair of large kettle-drums, called nakákeer. The last of these was followed by a water-carrier, termed a keiyim, who was also, as were most of the persons, clad in a scarlet benish. A keiyim of the water-carriers is a man who, for the sake of a present, and this empty title, carries a skin filled with sand and water, of greater weight, and for a longer period, than any of his brethren will venture to do ; and this feat he must accomplish without sitting down to rest, unless in a crouching posture. The keiyim of this procession began to carry his burthen, a skin of sand and water, about two hundred pounds in weight, at sunset of the preceding day, bore it in the procession, and continued to do so until sun-

set. This is a common custom in zeffehs of the great.

“ Next followed twelve camels with saddles or housings covered with scarlet or green cloth, ornamented with shells, of the kind called cowries, and having a number of small flags, slanting forward from the forepart of each saddle, as in the processions of the Kisweh and Mahhmil: indeed, these were the same saddles, &c. that were used in those processions on the last occasions.

“ Shortly after these had passed, a boat, mounted on a gun-carriage, and bearing Ahmad Páshá's chief reyyes, or boatmaster, was drawn along by a number of men. Next passed a small field-piece, which was fired in the street, before a public school-room, in which Ahmad Páshá was sitting to see his pageant. Some of the gink who had performed in the palace followed next, striking their castagnettes, and occasionally dancing: then two men on horseback; each bearing a long pole with an embroidered handkerchief tied at the top, another man bearing a tall cresset wound about with handkerchiefs: and several sakkas, to supply the spectators with water. Then followed a covered car, with open sides and back and front, drawn by four horses, and bearing the principal hired musicians who had performed at the palace. These performed also during the procession, though their music could scarcely be heard. A similar car fol-



lowed, in which were the 'Al'mehs, or female singers, who had performed in the Hareem during the festivities. They were fully veiled, as ladies ; and sang during the procession.

“ Here were wanting what are generally seen in a zeffeh of this kind ; namely, a number of cars, each bearing persons of some particular manufacture or trade, all at work in their several crafts ; even such as builders, whitewashers, and the like ; including persons of all, or almost all, the arts and manufactures practised in the metropolis.

“ After the car with the female singers followed a number of buffoons ; boys and men with hobby-horses made of palm-sticks and paper ; two men on stilts, which were about eight feet high ; the farce-players, whose absurd performances at the palace I have described, and the greater number of the gink, with their Turkish band. Next came a company of lancers, followed by pioneers, a full military band, and a body of infantry : then several eunuchs, on horseback. These immediately preceded a train of eight shabby European carriages, which conveyed the ladies.

“ Each carriage was drawn by four horses, driven by an Arab coachman, and attended by two or more eunuchs behind ; and its upper part was covered with shawls, spread upon the top, and hanging down before, behind, and on either side ; curtaining the windows, and concealing the ladies

within. In the foremost, which was the best carriage, was the bride. Many of the female spectators raised their shrill and quavering cries of joy (called *zagháreet*) as the carriage passed. The train of carriages was followed by a number of drummers and hautboy-players, who accompany ordinary bridal processions : each of these was on horseback, and clad in a scarlet benish. Ahmad Páshá's chief gardener, in a canopied car, which was filled and hung about with fruit, closed the procession. The time which the procession occupied in passing the place where I sat was just half an hour."

My brother's remarks on the shabbiness of the carriages used by the *grandeés* ten years since, lead me to tell you how different are the equipages of the present day in Cairo. Some are nearly as good as those you meet in Hyde Park ; and a carriage with four beautiful grey horses in which I saw Mohammad 'Alee last week, could hardly, I thought, be surpassed in good taste.

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## LETTER VII.

Tuesday, Dec. 16th, 1845.

HAVING received this evening a third invitation to witness the festivities on the occasion of the wedding of Zeyneb Hánúm, and finding that they will commence on Thursday next, I must now devote my whole attention to the task of giving you a description of the novel scenes of which I am about to be a spectator.

Zeyneb Hánúm is the youngest daughter of the Páshá, and her affianced husband is Kamil Páshá, lately Kámil Bey, a sort of aide-de-camp and private secretary to Mohammad 'Alee. The Sultán conferred upon him the rank of Páshá when he heard that he was proposed as the future son-in-law of the viceroy of Egypt.

It has occurred to me that I should do well to give you a kind of diary of events during the eighth day of the coming fête; for, excepting in such a form, I could not hope to give you a correct idea of an entertainment in every respect strange in its character to our notions of a bridal festival.

Dec. 18th.—About eleven o'clock in the morning I and my kind friend Mrs. Lieder were on our

way to the palace in the citadel, in which the festivities were celebrated. We had many interruptions on the way; for several regiments were marching in procession to the Ezbekeeyeh, in which stands the palace of the bride, and to which she is to descend on the eighth day of the entertainment. These regiments were preceded and followed by very respectable military bands. One procession attended a large figure of an elephant, mounted and led by Indians in effigy: the whole (elephant and Indians) to be blown up on the eighth evening, and thus form the finale of the fireworks, which are to be exhibited during every evening in the Ezbekeeyeh. After the elephant, a large ark was drawn, on wheels, attended by musicians and drummers making a deafening noise. Whether the ark is to share the same fate as the elephant, time will show.

The route to the citadel is marked by innumerable new glass lanterns, each containing ten lamps, mostly hung on ropes extending across the streets. When we began to ascend the hill upon which the citadel stands, we found that on either side of the new road temporary pillars, of various fanciful styles of architecture, had been erected, painted in bright colours, and gaily hung with lamps. The principal features of the architecture of the arches of the gateway, and other entrances of the palace, were hung with lamps, and the court presented a



very picturesque spectacle. Here were festoons of lamps, and many hung fruit-like from the trees; while the whole court was covered over with a red and white awning, producing a subdued light under a bright sunny sky. The garden was strikingly pretty, with the addition of bright lamps hung in festoons wherever they could be so arranged.

After gaining the last entrance, we passed the Hareem curtain, that impassable barrier to men, excepting the lord of the citadel, or any necessary employé; and we found the usual army of eunuchs, and female black slaves, looking out for the arrival of the European ladies, who had been invited. Passing through the lower saloon, we found the white slaves of many Hareems, gorgeously attired. With a full tide of these to accompany us, we proceeded up the staircase, and being directed, on reaching the upper great saloon, what course to pursue, we made our way through a dense crowd towards the seat of honour.

There we found the bride seated, raised upon cushions of pale pink satin, splendidly embroidered with gold. Her young brother, Mohammad 'Alee Bey, was seated by her side. On her left hand stood her Highness Nezleh Hánúm, the eldest daughter of the Páshá, showering small gold and silver coins among the crowd. This circumstance accounted for the presence of, perhaps, three thou-

sand persons, many of whom seemed very eager in striving to obtain the bounty. The coins thrown in the Hareem were pieces of five and three piastres, and silver paras mixed up with barley and salt. The reason for throwing the barley I could not learn, but the salt was intended to prevent the influence of the evil eye.

On the right hand of the bride sat the mother of Sa'eed Páshá, and Nezleh Hánúm appointed me a seat next to her, and Mrs. Lieder beyond me. When the shower of gold and silver ceased, the bride left the saloon, oppressed with the weight of gold and jewels, and supported by four slaves. The moment she rose, we were almost deafened by the sounds of many tambourines, and the shrill quavering cries of joy called zagháreet. The expression of her countenance was very sad, and gave rise to a report that she disliked her affianced husband. With her the crowd partially dispersed, and Nezleh Hánúm sat down, and as she received her own pipe, ordered that pipes should be offered to us; but we both declined them. I was surprised by the splendour of the mouthpieces. That which was offered to me was beautifully set with diamonds, and the stem was rich with lacing of gold thread. Her Highness' pipe was the most costly I have ever seen. It was of the same description as ours; but the amber mouthpiece, splendid with diamonds,

was as rich as art could make it; and the lower part of the pipe was beautifully decorated with a profusion of diamonds. The little tray in which the pipe-bowl rested was of exquisite enamel.

Coffee was served to us in the elegant manner of the high Hareem. A silver chafing-dish, suspended by chains, and containing live charcoal, upon which boiled the coffee in a tiny pot, was carried by a slave magnificently attired; while another bore the small round silver tray, with the little coffee-cups and their exquisite jewelled stands. All were costly; but those handed to her Highness were most splendid. The zarf, or stand of the coffee-cup, was spirally inlaid with diamonds, on a ground of delicate enamel.

The saloons are built in the form of an oblong cross: the whole is matted, and the ends are furnished with divans of pale dove-coloured satin, massively embroidered with gold, and finished with a fringe of gold twist about a foot deep. The walls and ceilings throughout are painted in good taste: the arabesque and gilding of the ceilings are chaste and beautiful; and though the paintings, representing generally Turkish summer palaces, are evidences that the artists employed had no knowledge of perspective, yet they are so well arranged to represent a sort of pannelled wall, the gilding above and on either side of these paintings is deli-

cately and tastefully applied, and, owing to the age of the decorations, the prevailing colour is a pale bluish grey, so that the whole is harmonious, or, to use an artistic term, all is in good keeping.

There is a lower saloon of the same form, and these may be considered as saloons of reception. The private apartments are entered from the corners of the centre of the cross, thus making up a rectangular figure. One compartment of the cross is occupied by the grand staircase; and the best situation for seeing all that took place was in the compartment opposite to the staircase in each saloon.

The views from the windows of that palace are beautiful and highly interesting. During the time of extreme confusion occasioned by showers of gold, I turned towards a window and was much impressed by the contrast the view presented with the scene within. The cemetery of Káïd Bey lay beneath, at some little distance in the desert. Never did the majestic beauty of that group of mosques and tombs so charm me, and never did the deep solitude and solemn stillness ever reigning among those monuments seem to me so deep and still. The city lay stretched to the left; and beyond it the green carpet spread by the inundation bordering upon the land of Goshen—the view is most imposing.

I have not yet told you of the magnificent dress



of the bride. She wore a yelek and trowsers of red Cashmere embroidered with gold in a florid style, equally gorgeous and elegant, and interspersed with pearls, with a saltah (or jacket) of red velvet lined with ermine, and almost covered with embroidery of gold and jewels. Her head-dress was absolutely grotesque, and of prodigious width: a pale yellow crape kerchief was bound across her forehead, and so arranged on either side as to resemble wings. On the front of this band, and on the spreading blue tassel of her tarboosh, were arranged a variety of diamond sprays, a tiara, and a crescent and star, the whole being surmounted by a small yellow bird, resembling the bird of Paradise excepting in colour, from which spread two long and curving tail-feathers, one bending down on the right, and the other on the left. She wore also a superb diamond necklace, of which I shall have more to say hereafter. Her hair was partly braided, partly dishevelled, and turned up and mingled with the blue tassel, without any regard to form or effect. Her girdle was a Cashmere shawl embroidered and fringed with gold. Nezleh Hánúm was attired in a yelek and trowsers of white satin, very delicately embroidered with gold and coloured flowers. Mohammad 'Alee Bey wore a tight military jacket elaborately embroidered with gold and with tags of pearls, and full cloth trowsers. He left us soon after the bride had re-

turned to her private apartments, that he might preside at a dinner given to the students of the Páshá's colleges. He is the youngest son of Mo-hammad 'Alee, now just twelve years of age. We should think it strange in Europe that a boy of that age should sit at the head of a table to which some hundreds were invited ; but I doubt not he presided well, for a Turk of almost any age has a keen sense of propriety, and wonderful self-possession.

Benches were now brought forward, and six female slaves approached us, each bearing a different instrument of music, while a little band of other performers, each with a tambourine, accompanied them. The six took their seats, three on each bench, and the tambouriners stood behind them, and on either side. The musicians played and sang several Turkish airs extremely well, during about half an hour, when the crowd again thickened, and another bride advanced towards the seat of honour, preceded and followed by the girls beating their tambourines. Her head-dress was as grotesque as that of the Páshá's daughter, bedecked with a profusion of diamonds, and surmounted by black and yellow feathers. Her saltah, too, resembled that of Zeyneb Hánum, and so did the shawl she wore as a girdle, but her yelek and trowsers were of striped Cashmere embroidered with gold. She threw herself at the feet of Nezleh Hánum, and at

those of the mother of Sa'eed Páshá, and then took her seat in the distinguished corner. Crowds then poured in, and Nezleh Hánun again threw a profusion of gold and silver coins among the multitude. The bride sat about ten minutes, looking completely wretched, and then retired, supported and accompanied in the same manner as her predecessor; and after having, with considerable difficulty, carried her burden of embroidery and jewels across the saloon, she fainted. Alas! poor brides! Mysterious as is the future to every girl on the eve of marriage, how tenfold grievous must be the apprehensions of her who knows nothing, but by report, of her affianced husband.

When the second bride had disappeared, and the crowd had swept away, leaving still a goodly company of hundreds, the musicians again sang and played until Nezleh Hánun rose to quit the saloon. The girls with tambourines preceded and followed her, beating their instruments as when they accompanied the brides. We now felt disposed to reconnoitre, and were soon joined by the mother of Mohammad 'Alee Bey, who gave us her usual charming welcome, and led us to the retiring-room which had been appointed for the European guests. She is really a very sweet, sunny-faced person, always in a pleasant, polite humour, and apparently always happy. She invited us to see the bridal presents, which had that morning arrived from the

bridegroom, and we accompanied her into an adjoining room, where many costly and beautiful jewels, dresses, services of plate, &c., were displayed, and where others were being unpacked. The jewel-box was covered with red velvet, and decorated outside with sprays of diamonds. We were shown about twelve dresses of velvet, gros de Naples, and satin, most splendidly embroidered with gold, all in the florid style before mentioned, bordered with gold lace, plaited, and so disposed as to form a fringe of flowers and leaves nearly three inches deep. In similar dresses some of the slaves were attired on that day. Within each dress was folded a magnificent Cashmere shawl. The slippers and mezz (or inner shoes) were beautifully set with diamonds, and the straps of a pair of bath clogs were exquisitely decorated with the same precious stones. The clogs were inlaid with mother-of-pearl, and gold tassels hung from the straps. I was much pleased with two scent-bottles which were completely covered with diamonds. There were four dinner-services of silver, and a curious silver tea-service, composed of a sort of vase or urn, and silver cups and saucers of the ordinary tea size. I remarked several trays of French china, and very elegant china dishes of basket-work for fruit : there were also many smaller presents on trays of silver. After admiring these costly gifts, I received an intimation that Nezleh



Hánum had directed that I should have the privilege of examining the whole paraphernalia of the bride. I was therefore conducted to another apartment, where the magnificent diamond girdle, of which you have perhaps heard, was given into my hands that I might examine it closely. I have since ascertained from the best authority that the cost of all the diamonds given by the Páshá to his daughter on this occasion has been 200,000*l.*, and of these ornaments the girdle and a necklace are the most costly and splendid. The girdle cost 40,000*l.*, the necklace 37,000*l.*, the ear-rings 12,000*l.*, and the bracelets 10,000*l.* sterling!

The necklace is composed of large brilliants set in silver; it is said to be unequalled by any in Europe, excepting one of Lady Londonderry's. Its price was considerably enhanced by the extreme difficulty of procuring the principal diamond. I observed also several very splendid diamond rings, one of them containing a brilliant of prodigious size. It is rather singular that, with the exception of a very beautiful rosary of pearls, there were no jewels but diamonds. The sprays for the head, all of diamonds set in silver, were magnificent. A rose with buds and leaves, a sprig of jasmine, a superb crescent and star, and a beautiful tiara most pleased me. Two watches set with an abundance of diamonds, and two magnificently decorated mirrors, also profusely set with diamonds, each of

which cost a thousand guineas, lay among the dazzling ornaments by which we were surrounded. Of the mirrors was one of delicate enamel, almost covered with diamonds; the other, of some composition, in which diamonds were arranged in a most tasteful and costly manner.

The slaves vied with each other in showing me the whole paraphernalia, and I was constantly asked, "Have you seen this?" and "Have you examined this?" and so magnificent was everything, that I found the display to be infinitely beyond my expectations. Presently a slave came to inform me from her Highness that she had more to show me if I would follow her down stairs: of course I assented, and followed her through passages down stairs innumerable, again through passages, and again down stairs, until, at the end of a long passage, she stopped before a closed door, and, calling to those within, announced my arrival. "The lady must enter alone, you must go back," answered one within. I did not quite like to lose my conductor, but I could not draw back, and could only hope that my excursion through nearly the whole range of that extensive palace might not end in an adventure. The door was very slowly and cautiously opened, and within I found three persons, two of whom were well known to me, the lady-treasurer of her highness and one of her especial companions. That lady-treasurer is one

of those persons who, without any beauty of countenance, possess a charm of expression which is perfectly fascinating. Her home is in the Kasr ed-Dubárah, now generally called the Kasr en-Neel; and she was at the citadel during the festival with the hundreds her companions, who were there as the attendants of Nezeleh Hánum. Her highness is never at the citadel but on such occasions, when she is deputed by her father, the Páshá, to direct the ceremonials.

To return to my rencontre, the upshot of my expedition. This lady-treasurer was desired by her Highness to open to me the remaining treasures, and also to show me all that were already unpacked. The room in which we were was large, and nearly half the floor was covered with wrappers for the in-door apparel and riding-dresses. These wrappers were perfectly magnificent, being composed of red velvet or Cashmere, embroidered and fringed with gold; and one was elaborately worked with pearls. I think that there were about twenty of them spread for display on round baskets, with covers for coffee and sherbet, of the same costly description. There were also a similarly embroidered prayer-carpet, and two padded red Cashmere wrappers, one about the size of a hearth-rug, and the other smaller, for the head: both exquisitely worked, fringed with gold, and lined with white silk. They were to be used after the bath, by

Mohammad 'Alee Páshá, when on a visit to the bride. There was also a beautiful satin coverlet for a bed, elegantly embroidered with gold. Here, too, I saw a splendid variety of dresses ; a variety, I mean, in respect of colour and fabric, but all embroidered in the same florid style. The embroidery of one was richly interspersed with diamonds, and it was lined and trimmed with sable. The head-veils were all of pale-coloured gauze, of different hues, with bright stripes of gold, all of the same pattern. The mother of the bride had sent her, as a wedding-present, a little box almost covered with diamonds, but what was to be its appropriation I do not know. I much admired a chafing-dish of silver, having a raised lid, surmounted by a fanciful ornament, consisting of a variety of fire-arms in silver, and war-trumpets, crowned by the crescent and star. There was a large silver tray belonging to this chafing-dish, to replace the cover when the latter should be removed. All the smaller articles were in trays decorated with crape of many colours ; and the floors of the rooms in which they were arranged were as gay as flower-gardens.

While I was engaged in examining these splendid and curious objects, a slave came and invited me to join the other European ladies, who had just arrived ; and I set out to retrace my many steps. My conductor led me to the same compartment of



the upper saloon in which we had seen the bride on our arrival ; and I found myself in a goodly company of European ladies, with Nezleh Hánúm sitting in the centre of the upper divan, as directress of the ceremonies. Her Highness shortly after rose, attended by two train-bearers, and led the way to a saloon where dinner was prepared for two hundred persons, perfectly in the European style. There was nothing on the table that could remind one of the East, excepting some bananas : plates, knives and forks, European dinner napkins, with the bread arranged in each as we have it at home, completed the illusion. The dinner was a cold collation ; and it could not well be otherwise, as the kitchens, without exaggeration, are a long walk from the *salle à manger*. Nezleh Hánúm did not head the table, on account of its great length, but presided at the side, and used a knife and fork, with a few side-glances at her guests, and occasional jests with those who stood behind her chair. I had a good situation near her, with the wife of Sa'eed Páshá on my left hand. That beautiful girl must not be passed over in silence. Her face and form are exquisite, and her manners perfectly graceful. Her tall slender figure is strikingly elegant ; and, best of her attractions, a lovely disposition beams in her expressive countenance. She was given in marriage last year to Sa'eed Páshá, a son of Mohammad 'Alee : I can only

hope that he treasures such a jewel. Few Orientals were seated; but the Páshás' wives and others holding high rank here, walked round the table during the repast: the bride herself being among them in dishabille, unobserved and unknown by the European guests, who had not yet seen her. I did not myself see her, though my eyes were wandering about in search of my too kind friend Mrs. Lieder, who, having been requested by Nezeleh Hánúm to assist her in attending to the comforts of the guests, was altogether negligent of her own.

Not long after the guests had taken their seats, the Hareem band entered, and commenced playing lively airs, which they continued during the dinner. The Eastern ladies in general seemed quite at their ease; the difficulties of the knife and fork did, however, occasionally present themselves. A lady near me requested her neighbour, or her neighbour volunteered, to show her the way to her mouth; accordingly they raised the fork together, and consequently the morsel dropped. This was done without a smile; indeed it was a grave subject; for, like the Persian ambassador described by Hajji Bába, the lady might have narrowly escaped losing an eye. Dinner, nevertheless, passed without any serious accident occurring; her Highness frequently inviting her guests to eat, and to feel themselves at home, by such phrases as these:—"In the

name of God, in the name of God ; O ladies ! my house is yours,"\* &c.

After dinner Nezleh Hánúm led the way to a room adjoining the saloon in which we had dined ; and, taking her seat in the centre of the upper end, she desired that all the ladies might be seated. The divan was a very miserable one, being awkwardly high, and sloping downwards towards the front ; consequently the Europeans were either half seated, and slipping forward, or drew their feet upon the divan. Neither manner, we were led to suppose, entirely satisfied her Highness, as a lady who said that she was deputed by her, inquired whether those ladies would sit in such positions in the presence of their own sovereigns ! An English lady sharply replied, " No ; but they would have chairs to sit upon, and not so unsuitable a divan." A lady, however, who sat near her Highness during the whole of the first evening, asserts, that the question thus put to the European ladies was unauthorized, and appears to have arisen from some mistake : that, on the contrary, Nezleh Hánúm desired that they might consider themselves at home ; that all ceremony might be dismissed ; that she considered the younger ladies as her children, and the elder ones as her sisters : and she requested that her feelings and wishes might be interpreted : but they were not : thus a false impression existed.

\* " Bismalláh, Bismilláh, Yá Sittáh, Beytee Beytkum."

We were all much amused with six Turkish girls, who danced, or rather tumbled about, very pleasantly ; appearing as though they were disciplined rompers. Had they laughed, the illusion would have been complete ; but they were grave to a fault. Three of these girls were dressed in red Cashmere, and three in blue, with black velvet zones and wide gold fringe beneath these. Their dresses, in respect of form, were tight waistcoats, full white muslin sleeves, and full trowsers. These dancers turned round and round, threw back their heads, and rolled them in circles ; knelt down, and rolled their heads again ; sprung up, and seemed as though they were running in the air ; and concluded by twisting white handkerchiefs, which they held in their hands, over their heads and under their arms alternately. A band of musicians played and sang in the Turkish manner during the dance. Six little girls succeeded those I have described : they were all Georgians, and were very interesting in appearance. The hair of each was dishevelled, and hanging down the back ; and their dresses were of pink Cashmere, tight vests, and full petticoats, with three rows of gold fringe on the latter. Their dancing pleased me more than that of their predecessors. They took infinite pains, and often nearly fell down with their exertions ; their pretty dark hair flying sometimes before their faces, and their shoes leaving them altogether. I quite enjoyed



their performance. Another group of dancers, from perhaps fifteen to eighteen years of age, dressed uniformly in European plaid silks, amused the spectators in much the same manner. The movements of the feet, which appear to be the last considered in the Turkish dance, consisted of three steps and a hop. These girls were succeeded by two 'A'lmehs, the first Arab singers of Egypt; and the band struck up some beautiful Arab airs; but on that evening the 'A'lmehs did not sing; they only danced in the Arab manner, for which performance they are also celebrated as the first of their day. The Arab dance has been sufficiently described by many travellers, therefore I need only remark that it is *extremely* disgusting.

After the performance of the 'A'lmehs, nearly all the European ladies partook of coffee and sherbet, and took their leave. I was among those who remained, intending to pass at least the following day and night. About eight others, whose carriages did not arrive, remained also, to pass the night.

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## LETTER VIII.

December, 1845.

ON the departure of the European guests, we had left the room in which we had been sitting to say "good-bye" to our friends and acquaintances; and when we returned, a very curious scene presented itself. Six of the fattest old ladies of the Hareem were running after each other in a circle, in the centre of the room, disguised in chintz coats nearly fitting their round persons, with high fool's-caps on their heads. Their game consisted in snatching at each other's caps, and throwing them down, and scrambling for them; while they continued their circle, running, jumping, and tumbling. It was very absurd, for the good ladies were particularly unwieldy.

A theatrical exhibition followed, in which a scolding wife was represented by a pretty girl, while six other girls, in male attire, took part in a conversation which, being in Turkish, I could not understand. The spirit, however, of the farce seemed to be that one of the six personated the pretty girl's husband, and the other five her paramours. They successively endeavoured to approach

her, while she appeared to encourage their addresses, but were each chased round the part of the saloon appropriated to these performances by the husband, caught, and then thrown down by him ; or rather, after a little wrestling, they one after another obediently rolled on the floor, and then got up and walked away. When this was over, her Highness rose, the tambourine-girls preceded and followed her as before, and we all retired for the night.

We were conducted to a room which was furnished round with divans, and in the centre was arranged a very large and long mosquito-curtain, of blue silk, under which, agreeably with the custom of the country, were placed, on the mat which covered the marble pavement, three large mattresses and pillows, with sheets and quilted coverlets. I mention these particulars to show you how carefully our comforts were considered ; for the Easterns themselves generally sleep on their divans. We who were to share these beds were five persons ; and we were all much tired, but too hungry to go to bed. Under such circumstances, I felt bold enough to ask for some supper for my companions and myself, and did so, and my request was most good-naturedly received and granted. A piece of cloth of gold was laid on the mat ; a pretty Arab stool was placed upon it, and a silver tray, containing several little dishes,

was brought. We supped right merrily, and the report of our good cheer taking wind, we were joined by two ladies, visitors, from another room, a mother and her daughter. I had during the day exceedingly admired those charming persons. They were Easterns, and were magnificently dressed, and wearing splendid diamonds; their whole attire was in perfect taste. When they joined our little supper-party they were in dishabille; but they were quite as beautiful with the simple white kerchiefs bound round their fair brows; and the plain cotton waistcoat and full trowsers, which formed their night-dress, became them admirably.

We were glad to go to bed, but our room was a thoroughfare, having doors opposite to each other; and persons were passing and repassing during nearly the whole night; consequently the night was far too lively to admit of much sleep. We were not aware, until the morning, that one, at least, of our comfortable quilted covers (which were as light and nearly as warm as eider-down) was of lilac satin, and beautifully adorned with a rich raised embroidery of gold.

Rising with the sun, we all felt that we should be glad if one of the many attendants who entered our room for the purpose of bidding us Good morning, should propose to bring us breakfast, when the pretty coffee-apparatus arrived, and a tiny cup of coffee was for each the portion. One of our



companions asked for some bread, and two flat cakes were brought, and divided amongst us. Finding that the English really liked an early breakfast, our attendants most good-naturedly promised that everything "should be very nice for us, and plentiful, on the following day; but they had not been aware that any one ate in the morning." We went to an adjoining room, which was set apart as a private room for us, a thoroughfare, as is generally the case, most exquisitely fitted up. It is the Páshá's favourite resort in the Hareem. The divans extend nearly round the three sides of the room, leaving only the spaces for the doors opposite to each other; they are of stone-coloured satin, embroidered with gold in raised work of fruit and flowers. The divans along the end of each division of the great saloon, which adjoins this room, are of the same description.

Our now little party were scarcely seated in this beautiful room, when the eldest wife of the Páshá, a very charming and affable old lady, entered, and, seeing us naturally rise to her, requested us immediately to resume our seats. When we had done so, she again most politely addressed us, assuring us of a hearty welcome, and adding that the palace was hers, and that she hoped we should remain. We had just acknowledged her kindness, when the favourite wife of Ibraheem Páshá joined our party, and conversed with us in a most amiable manner.

His Hareem are distinguished for great affability, and on the occasion of this festivity the manners of his whole family who were present were delightful. Indeed, the attentions which we Europeans received from all the principal inmates of the Hareem, and from visitors and others, could scarcely have been exceeded without becoming irksome. The foremost in performing offices of kindness was the lady of Hekekian Bey, who devoted her whole attention to the guests, and who had the happy art of making us feel at home even in the great palace of the citadel. Her kind voice greeted us whenever we were near her with the friendly inquiry whether we had everything that we needed to render us comfortable, or if there were anything she could order for us; and she had a most delightful coadjutor in Madame ——, who zealously assisted her in paying polite attention to the guests with a tact it was pleasing to observe; and, speaking admirably French, Italian, and Arabic, with some knowledge of Turkish, was delightfully qualified for her kind office, and was never at a loss in conversation with either Europeans or Easterns.

After a short chat with the ladies just mentioned in the room particularly appropriated to us, we proposed seeing and hearing what might be going forward in the great saloon below. On our arriving at the marble staircase, we heard the Arab female band in full concert; and when we reached

the first landing, and, turning, saw nearly the whole saloon, how heartily we wished that such a fairy-like scene could be transferred to canvas, and that thus our friends in England might be enabled to form some idea of Eastern magnificence. Trite as is the remark, I cannot help observing that the sight which here presented itself to me most strikingly reminded me of the "Thousand and One Nights." On the staircase stood here and there a slave gorgeously attired ; and, at the foot of the staircase, grouped as if for artistic effect, were ladies and slaves, whose dresses displayed such a combination of rich and delicate colours, and such variety of magnificent embroidery, while on their heads and waists glittered innumerable jewels, that they unknowingly presented so splendid an effect as beggars all description. In the centre of the great saloon sat a circular group of Arab musicians on cushions on the mat, with every variety of instrument used in this country, all beautifully picturesque in form, and daintily inlaid with mother-of-pearl and dark wood. These women were all wearing the white head-veil, bound across the forehead and under the chin in the sphinx-like fashion so generally adopted by the Arab women, and hanging entirely over their backs. You will imagine that in their picturesque simplicity of attire they formed a striking contrast and pleasing relief to the gorgeous splendour of the ladies of the Hareem. Beyond this circle was the

opposite compartment of the saloon, extending far away, with its row of windows, and crimson satin gold-embroidered divan across the end. Upon that divan sat all the elder members of the Páshá's family; Nezleh Hánum being in the right-hand corner. Forming a row on each side of the compartment were the ladies of Efendees belonging to the Páshá's household. The elders were simply attired; but the Efendees' wives were very splendidly adorned, and the attendant slaves magnificently apparelled.

Finding that we were expected to join the party in that part of the saloon, we did so, and looked back with admiration on the scene through which we had passed. The dresses of the day before were laid aside for others infinitely more costly and beautiful: indeed the splendour displayed on that second day in the hundreds of rich dresses and decorations, could hardly, I think, be surpassed; and, curiously enough, *every* article of dress was different from those worn on the day before; even the diamonds were changed for others which were more costly, in many cases. The dancing-girls, the little group of six, in pink Cashmere trimmed with gold fringe, alone retained their former dresses during the whole festivity, and their doing so had a very pleasing effect, for they were identified by their pretty dresses, and the very uniformity amidst so much variety was relieving to the eye. Two of



the Arab band rose from their cushions ; and I was surprised to recognise, when they came forward without their tarhahs, or head-veils; the two 'A'l-mehs of the preceding evening. They were tastefully attired, and a diamond crescent and star glittered on the right brow of each. One wore also a charm, contained in a little box very elegantly set with diamonds, and hung on a silk cord which passed over her left shoulder and under her right arm. Their dancing was odious ; but they were not merely dancers on this occasion : they sang in turns, and their melody was so charming, there was such a wild sweetness in the airs they sang, the quality of their voices was so singularly rich, and their execution was so wonderful, that had I possessed ears without eyes, the treat which they afforded would have been complete. As it was, I could listen without looking at them, and thus intensely enjoy the vocal performances of those remarkable songstresses. It is really wonderful that there should be a great similarity between their style of singing and that which one hears in the streets of Cairo, and yet that the effect of their performances should be so enchanting. They were succeeded by the young girls in pink and gold ; and their innocent romping dance pleased us, as it never failed to do ; but soon the 'A'l-mehs took their places, and they continued dancing for some time, joined by three others.

Weary of the sound of their castagnettes, and annoyed by their performances, my friend Mrs. Lieder and I were quite relieved by hearing the tambourines beaten merrily as Nezleh Hânûm rose and retired to her private apartments. It was always pretty to see those tambourine-girls preceding and following her whenever she changed her place, beating their instruments in time, and really giving to her movements a martial air. We, too, thought that a change might be agreeable, and passing to the upper saloon, we walked through the apartments, and backwards and forwards in the saloon, wondering when breakfast or dinner would be announced. At half-past twelve our appetites were so sharpened by the pure air which the inhabitants of the citadel enjoy, that we became rather anxious for some refreshment. At one o'clock we found that a *déjeûné à la fourchette* was prepared for the Europeans, and it was proposed that we should dine at six. Thus they conformed to the common hours of the Franks, and prepared a profusion of dishes; while the simple English habit of taking light and frequent meals was not understood by our Eastern hostess.

We returned to the lower saloon after dinner, and found the 'A'lmehs dancing. A young girl in male attire, dressed as a page, directed the entertainment. She held in her hand a black baton, to the upper end of which were attached numerous

little silver bells ; she called on and off the dancers and singers, and ushered in new comers, and conducted them to her Highness' presence. She is about twelve years of age, and possesses and exercises a degree of delegated authority which is remarkable. It was droll to hear her shout for a change in the performances, and it surprised me to find that she possessed the power of extending or cutting short any amusement. The circle of Arab musicians remained all day, playing and occasionally singing in the centre of the saloon, only varying their airs according as the singing or dancing was Arab or Turkish. The Turkish dancers succeeded the 'A'lmehs, each carrying a wooden sword and shield ; and they turned round and round, striking first their own shields, and then each other's swords and shields, with much dexterity, beating time to the Turkish airs which were played by the band. During that day the elder ladies of nearly all the great Hareems arrived.

In our wanderings through the palace, we found ourselves in a spacious and beautiful room, having in the centre a fountain. It is a pity that the magnificent silver fountain, lately presented to the Páshá by the East India Company, is not there. Its present place in the Kasr en Neel is not worthy of it, the palace is so very inferior to that of the citadel. The room above mentioned in the citadel is an oblong chamber paved with marble, the sur-

face of each slab containing sixteen square feet, with an oval marble tank in the centre measuring eighteen feet by ten, from the middle of which rise three shallow vases, one above another, in the upper edges of which are perforations whence the water flows into as many oval basins beneath. These vases form a tall pinnacle, the lower one being large, the second smaller, and the upper one smaller still. There are also marble receptacles for water-bottles which are beautifully constructed, and resemble the fountain in form. There is one large recess in the room, surrounded by windows, and furnished with a mat and divan.

I had reason to repent my wanderings on that day, for I was saddened by witnessing grief I had no power to assuage. It being very cold, I engaged Madame —— as my companion for a quick walk through the corridors for the sake of gaining warmth ; and we were cheerfully conversing, when our attention was painfully arrested by finding a little girl sitting on the floor, resting her head heavily on her hands, while the tears rolled down beneath her fingers. We begged to know the cause of her distress, and gently tried to remove her hands ; but to no purpose. She only pressed them closer to her face, and gave us no reply. On inquiry, we found that she was a new slave, and either her grief for the loss of friends, or her fears for the future, overwhelmed her. Her sorrow



was too deep for sympathy. My walk was spoilt, and my day too ; and the recollection of that little girl is still painful to me.

The afternoon passed much as the preceding had done. A sixth 'A'lmeh disguised as a clown joined the five of the morning, and cleverly enough imitated and ridiculed their gestures. Among the companions we liked best was a lady of most agreeable manners, who told me that she was the wife of Mohammad 'Alee, and mother of the late Seleem Bey. It was estimated that during the whole week of the festivity the daily average number of females in the palace was seven thousand, and there was a constant low sound among those thousands like that of the waves of the sea when heard from a short distance. At six o'clock we were summoned to dinner, which was served in the same manner as the first ; and after dinner the Turkish dancers and the 'A'lmehs resumed their performances, which they continued until about eleven o'clock, when six costly Cashmere shawls were presented to the 'A'lmehs, and she who acted the part of the clown wound hers round the fool's-cap which she wore. The evening concluded with theatrical amusements. The first farce was much the same as that I have described, with this difference, that a green folding frame was brought forward, and so arranged as to form a sort of enclosure, which the virago called her house, and in

which she welcomed several lady-gentlemen visitors, who were ever and anon turned out by her jealous and offended husband. The second farce was a representation of a bath, into which so many claimed admittance that it became impossible to accommodate one half of them. One applicant disguised as a Darveesh (in Arabic, Darweesh) gave no very cleanly reason for requiring the bath ; the conversation during that evening being a mixture of Arabic and Turkish, I was able to understand the drift of the performance. The people were however so long in the bath, that I and Mrs. Lieder left them to settle their pretended differences, and went to bed.

We found the blue silk curtain arranged as on the previous night. Three mattresses were under it, and our party would occupy but two ; we therefore expected company for the night, and were not disappointed.

I lay awake for some hours, for, in truth, I was in wretched spirits, and little disposed for sleep. The trouble of the poor slave was swallowed up in one far more grievous. A eunuch belonging to one of the great hareems had, in the evening of the preceding day, snatched from the head of his mistress a diamond spray. She immediately missed it, and accused him of the theft. He denied it, but a peasant woman who happened to be present asserted that she saw him take its

He was stripped, and the diamonds were found on his person. It was his third offence, and there was no tribunal to which he could appeal. He was the property of his master, and his life was in his hands. He was condemned to be beaten, and then to be put into a sack, and thrown into the Nile; and the order was executed. I heard of it in the evening, and in the morning of that day the poor fellow had been drowned. Had we but known it before his life was gone, we might have petitioned for him, and I do believe that our petition would have been granted; for the evident desire to afford gratification to the European guests was apparent in every thing. Would to Heaven we had been able to save him!

During each of the nights in the palace, there were but two quiet hours, from about two to four o'clock, owing to the irregularity of the Easterns in their seasons for taking rest. At about two hours after midnight, a lady raised our curtain, and asked if there remained room for her. We replied that one bed was unoccupied; and she immediately dropped off her slippers only, and crept into bed full dressed; her rich embroidery of gold glittering by the subdued light which the candles threw within our curtain. After very little sleep, we were truly glad to see the gleam of day. Our stranger-companion rose with us; and taking off her yelek and saltah, arranged afresh her lace

shirt, and put her apparel on again. This was all the freshening she desired in the morning ; and she came to breakfast without even washing her hands.

Our breakfast consisted of toast and butter and tarts, with the usual little cups of coffee ; but the coffee-bearer remarked, “ A number of such cups will make one large one ; and I will pour as long as you like.” We did not, however, tax her. Our Eastern companion helping herself to some toast, a bystander exclaimed, “ The toast is for the *English* ladies.” She immediately replaced it ; but we begged she would oblige us by sharing our breakfast, and she did so gladly, for the toast was a novelty.

After breakfast, all was bustle and activity : the Páshá had arrived, and was in the fountain-room above mentioned, and the bride was going down to kiss his hand. All the visitors arranged themselves in the upper saloon to see her pass, and descend the stairs. We were well placed, and had an excellent view of her. Before she appeared, the shrill zagháreet and loud beating of tambourines announced her to be on her way. The dancers in pink and gold appeared first, each with a tambourine, and dancing and turning round with much spirit ; then a band of musicians ; and then some more little dancers. Nezleh Hánúm followed them with attendants and trainbearers, all again



in new dresses. Then walked the bride, supported on the right hand by her mother, and on the left hand by the wife of Sa'eed Páshá. The bride's face was perfectly colourless, and she appeared to sustain her trouble, and the weight of her ornaments, with great difficulty. The beautiful face of Sa'eed Páshá's wife, excepting that her expressive countenance beamed with deep feeling, was like that of a marble statue. I have seldom seen such a change; on that morning she looked as though she were a bride herself; and an *Eastern* one too. While the bride was passing down the stairs, her mother stopped her to place an additional diamond spray on her head-dress, which was already nearly covered with diamonds, as she was really wearing at one time all the head-ornaments I have described to you. She also wore the magnificent girdle; otherwise her dress was the same as that in which I had seen her first. She was followed by about thirty slaves, gorgeously attired; and then the second bride followed, attended similarly, and wearing also the same dress in which she had first appeared. Crowds passed down the staircase with them, and crossed the lower saloon; but Nezleh Hánum, and the brides, with their immediate attendants, alone entered the room where the Páshá awaited their arrival. They remained with him about ten minutes, when he left the palace, and they retraced their steps, attended as when they

descended. The whole aspect of this second procession was the same as that of the first, excepting that those most nearly concerned looked as though they had passed through a painful ordeal.

Intending to return on that day (Saturday) to spend Sunday at home, and to see my dear ones, and finding my kind friend in the same mind, we both prepared for departure, as soon as the brides had repassed; and, now at home, I must tell you of the entertainment the Páshá gave his male guests, and of the out-door fantasia. By the way, this word fantasia is one of the most useful of all words here; every decoration, however applied, every entertainment, musical or otherwise, is styled a fantasia.

Mohammed 'Alee Páshá entertained a different select dinner party on the several days of the festivity. Among the persons invited by him were the consuls, and many of the European travellers and residents in Egypt. On one day the principal 'Ulama dined with him; and in the evening, after dinner, he led these grave and dignified personages into an apartment which had been fitted up as a theatre, to witness there the performances of a company of European actors! It was the first time, they say, that any of them had been present at such a scene; and we may reckon their adventure among the greatest of all the European innovations which occurred during the festivities.

On the morning of the first day of the festivities, while I was preparing to go to the citadel, the bridegroom's presents, which I have described to you, were conveyed to Zeyneb Hánúm with some pomp from her future abode in the Ezbekeeyeh. A friend who witnessed it described it to me as follows:—One of the Páshá's military bands headed the train, followed by a regiment of lancers. Then came a number of military officers on foot, bearing on their heads the trays of sweetmeats; and, after these, the carriages in which the jewels, plate, dresses, &c. were deposited. Each carriage was drawn by four horses, and covered with green velvet fringed with gold. On either side of each walked three officers in scarlet and gold. Some more officers bearing trays of sweetmeats followed the carriages, and another regiment of lancers and a military band closed the procession.

On each night there are theatrical performances at the citadel, and tickets are sent to the Europeans and to as many Easterns as can be accommodated. Three hundred cooks are employed daily to prepare excellent food for the poor in the palace of the Ezbekeeyeh. The long route from the Ezbekeeyeh to the citadel, extending about two miles, is hung with large lanterns, each containing ten well-lighted lamps, and the Ezbekeeyeh, the citadel, and many of the principal houses were illuminated. The great irregular place called the Ezbekeeyeh,

where the palace of the bride is situated, being of large extent, nearly half a mile in its greatest length, and about a third of a mile in its greatest width, is the chief scene of the out-door amusements. Its conversion, from a spacious lake into a pleasant garden, surrounded by a canal, and crossed by several roads, is now almost complete. Here, near to each extremity of its main road, which traverses it from west to east (from the side of the palace of the bride, and the exterior of the city, towards the heart of the metropolis), are erected two large and lofty triumphal arches. These are illuminated with a profusion of small lamps. The road between them is bordered by illuminated pillars, and by small globe-shaped lanterns of red and white paper. Many hundreds of this kind of lamp are also hung upon cords between the trees which border the whole tract of garden-ground and the several roads : and a large screen which conceals the front of the principal part of the bride's palace is hung with a vast number of similar lights. The general aspect of the place at night is singularly beautiful and picturesque.

During each day wrestlers, rope-dancers, and musicians entertain the people in several places ; but the great focus for amusement is the Ezbe-keeyeh. Every night there is a display of an abundance of rockets and other very good fireworks ; therefore while I am in the Hareem I have



the satisfaction of knowing that my dear children have amusements which they much enjoy. At the top of a very high soaped pole in the Ezbekeeyeh a shawl and ten pounds have been placed, to be the property of any one who can climb to the top. Many and earnest have already been the attempts of the poor people to obtain this boon; but they have fallen down like stones after gaining a certain height. During each day there are frequent discharges of artillery from the citadel and other parts, and the cannons thunder over the city at least four times each day.

On Monday a curious procession took place; the jewels and almost the whole paraphernalia of the bride being pompously conveyed from the citadel to the Ezbekeeyeh. The jewels were uncovered, as well as many other costly things. The following account I have received from friends, for I did not witness it. At an early hour the route from the Ezbekeeyeh to the citadel was densely crowded, and thousands were gazing from the windows and roofs of the houses. It was headed by an excellent military band playing European airs. A regiment of lancers next followed. The bridegroom took his seat at a window of the Páshá's stables, near the Ezbekeeyeh; and I should think it was as amusing a circumstance as any attending the procession to see one so nearly concerned in the stirring events of the time climb up to such a place,

followed by his attendants, that he might have a good view of the property of his future wife. He was dressed in the present Constantinople style, with a diamond badge. He is a manly and good-looking person, apparently about thirty years of age. His horse was handsomely caparisoned. A number of officers in the uniform of the regular troops followed the lancers in the procession. Their dresses were beautifully embroidered, and they formed a very picturesque body. Many Muslim school-boys passed next, chanting suitable passages from the Kur-an. Then followed men on stilts, clad in short vests and long full petticoats; and next the Páshá's band on horseback, dressed in scarlet and gold, and playing European airs; and a troop of the lancers. The zagháreet from the hundreds of women in the streets, in the houses, and on the house-tops, was sometimes almost stunning, but had a joyous sound, although it did not mingle harmoniously with the European airs. A regiment of cuirassiers, never seen before by many of the oldest residents in Cairo, passed next; and then, some wrestlers, clad in leather drawers, and with their bodies oiled. Several regiments of foot-soldiers followed these, bearing red and white silk flags with the crescent and star on each. Another military band and a numerous company of well-dressed and well-mounted officers. A hundred and fifty men, handsomely attired, bearing on their

heads covered trays tastefully ornamented with coloured crape and ribbons, divided into two companies ; the first, consisting of forty, with a number of eunuchs, preceded and followed the carriages in which were conveyed, exposed to public view, the jewels, plate, &c. The latter part of the train consisted of a troop of cavalry, a large body of infantry, a military band, a troop of lancers, another of cuirassiers, and another military band. There was little in the procession to remind one of the old fashioned Eastern pageants. No police seemed to be employed to maintain order, and I did not hear that such persons were required.

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## LETTER IX.

December, 1845.

ON Tuesday morning Mrs. Lieder returned with me to the palace, where we were received with distinguished politeness by Nezleh Hánum, and warmly welcomed by many. The consideration shown to us by the lady-treasurer, and all connected with the Kasr-en-Neel, was but a confirmation of what I have before remarked to you, that my dear friend Mrs. Lieder had, during her residence in Egypt, completely won their confidence and affection. She had much of prejudice to overcome when she was introduced into the Hareem of Mohammad 'Alee ; but before many weeks had passed, a general feeling pervaded the minds of its members that the English lady desired their good, and they looked with pleasure for the hour of her arrival. That feeling has grown into affection ; and I have always seen them welcome her as though she were a near relation. On the day of our return their cordiality was particularly manifested, because Mrs. Lieder had not led them to suppose she should return when she quitted the Hareem on Saturday.

Until breakfast was announced, Turkish and



Arab dancers, and a full Arab band, filled up the hours. At one o'clock breakfast was prepared, and the mother of Mohammad 'Alee presided. Much credit is due to the Europeans who had the ordering of the refreshments for the guests. Everything was so quietly and so well arranged for the many hundreds who visited the palace, that it was matter of surprise to me how it was managed. Had the entertainment been Turkish, there were too many hands to prepare it ; but being entirely European, the inmates of the Hareem could only help as they were directed, and consequently the responsibility of pleasing the guests fell entirely upon the Europeans employed.

On descending to the lower saloon we found a group of Turkish dancers ; they were succeeded by the 'A'lmehs, who danced and sang alternately. During their performances, eight interesting-looking little girls arranged themselves in a row, waiting a signal for beginning their lively dance. They were dressed in black Cashmere richly embroidered with gold, and they wore black silk caps, each with a long tassel of pearls, which hung over the left ear. These caps were very picturesque, and the dishevelled hair of those pretty little dark-eyed Georgians harmonized well with the *dégagé* style of their head-dress.

Nezleh Hánum was much pleased by an expression of approbation which fell from a lady with

whom I have the pleasure of being acquainted, and her Highness requested me to return the compliment for her; and added, while she looked with a smile at the European ladies who were her guests, "The ladies who are visiting us are beautiful; our house is theirs, and I thank them for their company."

The queen of beauty, the wife of Sa'eed Páshá, presided at the dinner at six o'clock, and most gracefully did the honours of the table. There were more Europeans on that day than on any day previous, excepting the first of the entertainment. After each meal coffee was offered, and frequently during each day. We descended after dinner to the lower saloon, where we found the Arab band seated in the centre as usual, with hundreds of auditors, and, in her usual place, her Highness Nezleh Hánum, with the elder ladies of the Páshá's family, the 'A'lmehs dancing before them. Soon after our entrance, those admirable songstresses delighted us with their Arab airs, so singing that the great saloon seemed filled with music, as though by a full orchestra; and yet their tones were so modulated that they fell sweetly on the ear. The taller set of the Turkish dancers came forward when the singing of the 'A'lmehs ceased, and as they danced, the musicians who accompanied them sang some Turkish airs. One thing I thought quite a pity;—the Turkish dancers on that occasion, for the first

time during our visit, imitated the disgusting dancing of the 'A/mehs : it perfectly spoilt those hitherto innocent-looking dancers, whose graceful romping before was really pleasant to witness. Enough of this subject. They were succeeded by an exceedingly fat old lady, who, disguised as a man, wearing a chintz surtout and high fool's-cap, came running forward, bearing a tray of sweetmeats. She was soon followed by the actresses of the former evenings, to whom she offered the sweetmeats for sale. One scolded her, another cheated her, a third stole her sweetmeats, and a fourth threw her on the ground with her tray, and left her bewailing the loss of her sweets and the blows she had received. While loudly lamenting, a light footstep near her put her on the alert, and she jumped on her feet just in time to secure one of her persecutors, who came to steal more of her dainties, and to bestow upon the culprit an apparently hearty beating. Becoming liberal, she afterwards allowed some to be taken by two whom she favoured, while she capriciously punished others. Thus occupied, we left her ; for the night was exceedingly cold, and the wind whistled through that great saloon fearfully to those who, having mercifully passed through the great heat of summer, find an Egyptian winter severe, and dare not risk exposure to its really piercing cold unless protected by substantial additional clothing. The Easterns are wise in this

respect, and scruple not at all to put on the most simple wrapper in the most distinguished company. Their simple wrappers, however, are costly ; for, although very rarely embroidered, excepting sometimes with black, they are generally lined with fur. I do not refer to the saltah ; these are generally exquisitely and elaborately embroidered ; but to a jacket of the same form, considerably larger, the sleeves extending to the hands, and the jacket itself being ungracefully long. The Constantinople winter-coat for ladies, which much resembles the modern great-coat of England, having a high collar, being cut to fit the back, and often extending to the knees, is also worn in winter by many ladies. But I have quite run away on the subject of these surtouts, and must go back to tell you of our night arrangements.

We found in our usual sleeping-room two mattresses, &c., under a musquito-net of blue crape ; and always counting our party for the night by the number of our mattresses, we found that we should have but two companions, a friend and her little girl. I had requested that the doors of our room might be locked for the night, and my request was granted. Both the doors were locked, one without, the other within. The key, however, of one door remained outside, and we were no sooner quiet than it softly opened, and two Eastern ladies came gently in, and, taking two divan cushions as pillows, laid



themselves down on the divan, and rolled themselves round, taking off their girdles, and, with them, covering themselves entirely, so that each resembled a large round bundle in a Cashmere shawl. Towards morning another entered, and endeavoured to open the second door. Poor soul! she really was in rather an inconvenient position; having remained longer than she had intended witnessing the amusements, and being very sleepy, she desired to pass through to her bed-room. There was another way, it is true, but a very long and cheerless route down many stairs, through many passages, and up many stairs again; but this she was reluctant to take at two o'clock in the morning, and when all the lights of those staircases and passages had nearly burnt their last. The stranger fretted and then scolded, not at us, but at those who had taken so much care of the English ladies; and the fretting and scolding engaged the good lady long enough to have brought her considerably on her way by the long route. When she was gone I fell asleep, but our friend who shared the protection of our mosquito-net was kept awake by the intrusion of several persons, who, having put out our light, remained for some time in the room. I mention these trifling particulars to give you some idea of the night-habits, or rather, the absence of any habits of comfort during the nights in the Hareems. It is not only on occasions of festivity that their hours

of rest are thus irregular ; although they are especially so at those times, the chief entertainment being during the nights. It is their general practice to take a siesta after dinner ; and it depends upon the length of that afternoon's nap whether a night's rest is to be partially or fully enjoyed, or, as in some cases, altogether dispensed with.

Our night being passed, we rose as usual with the sun ; and by and by a slave entered with a tray containing a number of tumblers ; another followed her bearing a large basin full of something very hot, and in which was a very large ladle ; then came a third with toast and butter. The pretty stool was brought, and the tray set upon it ; the toast and butter placed in the middle, and a glass set before each person ; and ere this ceremony was concluded, several friends had joined us, and we formed a cheerful circle, while the two first-comers of the previous night remained as round and as immovable on the divan as when they first composed themselves to sleep. When the ladling commenced, we were all glad to find that what had appeared to be, from the strange manner in which it was served up, brown soup, proved to be excellent *café-au-lait*. How much may we be deceived by appearances ! A singular scene awaited us in the lower saloon after breakfast. Hearing that the Páshá had arrived, we all descended, and found the saloon almost deserted ; and he, as before, was in the

fountain-room. Several eunuchs were stationed at every door to prevent ingress to the saloon; but we, being of course unmolested, chose an excellent situation for seeing the Páshá pass. After a short time he walked through, leaning on the arm of his daughter Nezleh Hánúm. He was looking remarkably well, his white beard forming a picturesque appendage to his expressive countenance. As soon as he had passed, the many doors of the saloon were thrown open, and the rush of women from all sides could only be compared to the breaking in of a flood of water: it was fearful. We soon learnt the cause: the Páshá had dropped gold coins (exactly equivalent to our guineas) as he walked through. It is much to be deplored that he not only suffers that barbarous custom of throwing money, but sanctions it by his own example. The consequences are always frightful when it is practised in a great Hareem, to which free access is given to all classes of women during a festivity, or during a procession, in the close and crowded streets of an Eastern city. It is altogether inconsistent with the enlarged views entertained by Mohammad 'Alee on the subject of civilization.

On the morning of this day (Wednesday), the last day of the festivities in the Hareem, almost all the European ladies who had dined in the palace on the first day came again, and many more arrived from Alexandria. It was the seventh day, that on

which the hands of the bride are dyed with henna after taking the bath, according to ancient custom, and the day before she is introduced to the bridegroom. Among the newly arrived Easterns on this and the two previous days was a little girl, apparently about six years of age: her dress was embroidered with gold, and her head adorned with jewels in the most costly manner; and she was attended by a little negro slave, who sometimes walked behind her, and sometimes by her side, talking and laughing with the great little lady, and always bearing her long and glittering train. The familiarity and the respect of such young attendants are very remarkable; and the child who is at once the slave and companion of her little mistress, is almost invariably a favourite with her lady's parents.

The crowds by which the palace was thronged during the festivities were such as to cause some apprehension as to the security of the building; consequently, some architects or surveyors were summoned to inspect the upper saloon. It happened that, when they arrived, Mrs. Lieder was passing across the saloon, and she was suddenly surprised on seeing the army of eunuchs rush up the staircase, and drive before them all the ladies of the Hareem and their slaves, who happened to be there, as though they were driving sheep; brandishing their long sticks, and enforcing the



obedience of the slaves, while they used no gentle means in expelling the ladies. In about two minutes, no one remained in the saloon but Mrs. Lieder and the eunuchs; and then several veiled men were ushered up, guarded and held by eunuchs. When I say veiled, I mean that they had handkerchiefs bound over their faces. The eunuchs stationed themselves at every door, and then the surveyors were suffered to unveil. The mats were rolled up, and the floors and walls examined, to see if there were any settlement. The result of the investigation was satisfactory; but we thought it might still be feared that the evening entertainment might endanger the building, for it was arranged that it should be below. I should imagine that the safety of almost any building might be endangered by the thousands which thronged the citadel.

The entertainment during the Wednesday consisted in the performances of the 'A'lmehs, until we were invited to breakfast at one o'clock; but we had scarcely reached the room where it was prepared, when we were informed that the bride was going down on her way to the bath, and would remain some time in the lower saloon. We all descended, and witnessed a very curious scene. A passage was formed by the eunuchs, from the staircase, across the saloon, and to the seat of honour in the corner. Through this we passed, a row of

eunuchs fronting the crowd on either side, and preventing any one entering the avenue which they had formed, excepting European ladies, and Easterns of rank.

I was seated very near to the place prepared for the bride. The guns thundered from the citadel, and were answered from the fort on Mount Mukattam; and when their echo was hushed, we heard the zagháreet from a distant chamber in the palace; it gradually drew nearer, when the merry tambourine was heard, and soon the dancing-girls in pink and gold were seen on the great staircase, followed by many magnificently-dressed attendants, in the midst of whom the bride slowly descended. As she approached us we saw that her jewels, which had been paraded in the Ezbekeeyeh, were again on her person; and her dress on this occasion made them look more brilliant and more magnificent than ever. Her head-dress was still the same, excepting that innumerable narrow slips of flat gold, about two feet long, were appended to it on either side before her ears: behind her ears, two short tails of sable. A head-veil of lavender-coloured gauze striped with gold hung from the back of her head-dress. She wore the splendid diamond girdle and necklace, and all the jewels for her head were disposed, or rather crowded together, on her cap and headkerchief. Her yelek and trowsers were of pale green silk, gorgeously embroidered

and fringed with gold ; and her saltah of red velvet, adorned with gold and jewels, and lined with fur.

She took the seat of honour, and several magnificently-dressed persons fanned her as she sat. The showering of gold then commenced ; and it was on this occasion thrown by all the ladies nearly connected with Mohammad 'Alee and his family. The rush, wherever it was thrown, was perfectly overwhelming to many hundreds ; and not far from us a poor little child of three years of age was trodden to death ! Most thankful were we that we did not hear of the death of the dear child, and of the distress of its poor mother, until some time after the evil had occurred ; nor did we hear its cries. The rush for the money being always in directions from the part where we (the Europeans) were sitting, as it was thrown by Eastern ladies who were among us, we were in perfect security ; but egress would have been impossible during that tumult. I thought that the bride looked less miserable than on the previous days, and when one of her fanners accidentally struck her on her face, she smiled. The passage was cleared in the same manner by the eunuchs for the entrance of the second bride. She came attended in the same manner as the Páshá's daughter, and the same scene was enacted. Her head-dress, too, was the same as before, with the addition of the flowing strips of gold ; and her yelek and trowsers were

of white silk, most tastefully embroidered with gold thread, and with coloured flowers and leaves. When the brides had remained about ten minutes. a way was again cleared by the eunuchs, and with a row of those guards on either side, they retired.

We were all then invited to dinner, and about three hundred sat down to table. Nezeleh Hánúm presided. After dinner, Turkish and Arab dancing, and the delightful singing of the 'A'lmehs, in turns amused the company. Crowds continued to pour in until midnight, when about twenty slaves came forward, each bearing in her hands a dress in a piece of cloth of gold. These, it was said, were presents to be dispensed in honour of the principal bride. One branch of the double staircase was then cleared for her descent, while the other was densely crowded, and the procession (termed the procession of the candles) commenced. A number of eunuchs slowly descended the staircase first, bearing each a large painted wax candle, about four feet long: then a blaze of innumerable candles appeared at the head of the stairs, and flowed gently down, like a river of light. This effect was produced by a number of slaves, each bearing seven or eight wax-lights, fixed in a basket decorated with gaily-coloured flowers, on a small green jar, containing, I am told, paste of henna for dyeing the hands, to give them a deep orange-red hue, which many, by a second and different application,



change to black. The jars they held in their hands, and raised high over their heads. Among those slaves walked the bride, blazing with diamonds; her jewels reflecting the hundreds of lights around her. She was preceded and attended as usual by the dancers, and by girls beating their tambourines. When all the candle-bearers reached and crossed the floor of the lower saloon, the noise produced by the shrill cries of joy and the beating of the tambourines was almost deafening.

The bride remained about a quarter of an hour, and then with her attendant band, and numerous candle-bearers, she crossed the saloon, and ascended the staircase. I felt a desire to ascend to the upper saloon in order to look down upon the scene which would present itself when the second bride should descend the stairs; and I did so, but I had nearly paid very dearly for my temerity. I was not aware that, during the exit of the first bride, money had been thrown among the women; and I only expected to ascend with the stream. When, however, I had reached the centre of the saloon, I was, indeed, in troubled waters. Two or three torrents of human beings rushed from different directions, while the eunuchs dashed in among them, and used their whole force to preserve order. A large body of women was driven against me, and I was tossed like a ball into a crowd coming another way. Thus driven to and fro, and gaining by each convulsion

a little way towards the staircase, I saw that Mrs. Lieder, whom I had lost, had just reached it in safety. I had still a few feet to gain, and I had no strength left to make my way. Finding myself close to one of the eunuchs, I threw myself upon his protection, and told him that I wanted to reach the staircase. In another moment he kindly took me, as though I had been a child, and placed me on the stairs in security.

In the upper saloon we found that all the elder eunuchs had received presents of Cashmere shawls; several had received two; and one had three or four wound around him in different directions. There, also, all the candle-bearers were waiting to attend the second bride. She soon appeared, and, with her retinue, crossed the saloon and passed down the staircase. It was pretty to look down upon the lights, the dancers, and the bride; for she too, with her jewels, gave additional light to the scene; but the spectacle was not nearly so imposing as when seen from below. We waited her return, and saw the close of the brilliant exhibition at nearly two o'clock on Christmas morning.

It now became an easier matter to make our way through the crowd. We found the lights dying away in the illuminated court of the palace; and as we drove through the streets of Cairo, the city seemed deserted. We saw but two persons on our way to the Ezbekeeyeh, and the man with the

mesh'al (or cresset) running before the horses, and holding high his flaming light, was the only object of interest. The gleam cast by the burning wood on his simple but picturesque costume, made him appear as though he too were wearing a holiday garb.

The zeffeh, or procession of the bride, from the citadel to her own palace, did not take place until after church on Christmas-day : but I was so completely tired that I could not go to see it ; and, therefore, I give you the description which I received from my friends.

Though all the inhabitants of Cairo seemed congregated to view it, the zeffeh was not well calculated to gratify the curiosity it excited. It was little more than a mere display of soldiery and carriages : the former, half Europeanized in dress ; and the latter, with few exceptions, just such as are seen in the streets of London or Paris. It was headed by a full military band preceding three troops of lancers, and as many bands of trumpeters. These were followed, first by a numerous body of cuirassiers ; and, next, by about a dozen field-pieces with their ammunition. Some wrestlers and mock combatants with swords interrupted the military train, preceding a few pioneers, and four companies of infantry, each with its band. A very numerous body of officers rode at their rear. Among them were Mohammad 'Alee Bey and a son of Ibraheem

Páshá, with many of the grandees of Cairo : those of highest rank occupying the rear. Then came between thirty and forty carriages; the last of which was the state carriage of the bride. This was surrounded by a host of well mounted eunuchs and other officers, and by four men bearing some orange-branches bound together and laden with fruit. It was drawn by six horses; and its blinds were closed. The coachman of each carriage had a Cashmere shawl placed over his right shoulder and tied at the left side. A large body of lancers closed what may properly be called the zeffeh. The cries of joy raised by the female portion of the spectators as the carriage of the bride passed considerably increased the uproar, which was otherwise great. During the procession, chaooshes threw pieces of money upon the roofs of the lower houses, into the first-floor windows, and among the dense crowds in the streets, and six persons were, in consequence, trodden to death! The carriage of Nezleh Hánım followed at some distance after the procession, and after it a train of the Páshá's cooks, bearing trays of food, which they distributed to the poor.

The shawl and the money at the top of the soaped pole defied all attempts to reach them until after the conclusion of the festivities, when the man who placed them there succeeded in making them his prize. He did not attempt the feat until



all others who had tried the ascent were hors de combat. The mock elephant and the ark, I am told, were conveyed back to the citadel, instead of being blown up as was expected.

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## LETTER X.

March, 1846.

YOU will be curious to hear of the reception of the bride by her husband. When her carriage came into the Hareem-court of her palace, Kámil Páshá was at the door to receive her ; but for two hours she remained with the doors and blinds fast closed, according to the etiquette of resistance ; and she would have continued to make her carriage her castle much longer, had not the press of people, who desired to know the moment of her ascent, been so great as to create an uproar outside the palace-gates. At length the carriage was opened, and Kámil Páshá approached, and, uncovering the hands and feet of the bride, kissed them both respectfully, but did not then uncover her face. Taking her in his arms, he lifted her from the carriage, carried her up stairs, and placed her on a divan in a magnificently-furnished apartment, where he left her with her attendants for some hours. Late in the evening he requested permission to visit her, and did so in the presence of several visitors and attendants. She was veiled when he entered the saloon ; and he approached with much humility,

and, after kissing her hands and feet, uncovered her face ; and retiring backwards, gazed upon her for a moment ; after which he drew near a second time, and kissed her hands and feet again. He then conversed with her on various subjects for about an hour and a half, and retired to his own apartments, and for eleven days he visited his bride in the same ceremonious manner. Since that period, I understand that she has thrown off her reserve.

The festivities in the family of Mohammad 'Alee have soon given place to mourning, for two persons very nearly connected with him are hourly expected to breathe their last. The one is his third wife, and the other the widow of his son Isma'eel Páshá. To the latter the cares of the Viceroy are chiefly directed. It is a curious fact, that she is the widow of a boy who was murdered in Sennár when only sixteen years of age ! Since his death, she has generally resided in Constantinople, and having considerable influence with the mother of the Sul-tán, she has constantly exercised it in favour of Mohammad 'Alee. His interest has been her great aim at all times. He is therefore unwilling to lose her, and clings to every hope that she may ultimately recover. Her two principal attendants are the bride of Kámil Páshá and another near relation of Mohammad 'Alee. Those two persons sit up with the invalid during alternate nights ; and, strange to say, they and all the attendants are

in deep mourning. How such an ill-timed compliment affects the mind of the sufferer I cannot tell ; but of one thing I am certain, so dismal an arrangement would kill a nervous person.

The late grand wedding, to which I did not expect again to have to allude, seems to have been productive of one very bad consequence ; for, since its termination, robberies have been unusually numerous in Cairo ; and I think they may in a great measure be attributed to the abominable act of letting loose on the public all the criminals confined in the prisons on that occasion. The thieves of Egypt are, I believe, surpassed by none in impudence. The following instance is one of which I have just been told :—

During the absence of a family from their home, a woman entered their house, and ascended to the bath, which is an apartment very little used in the East, excepting by the higher orders of Easterns ; persons of the middle and lower classes always preferring the public baths. When the family returned, they heard the cries of an infant, and finding whence the noise proceeded, they entered the bath, and there beheld the woman with a new-born child. She immediately accosted them with the utmost effrontery, admonishing them to treat her and her infant with the greatest consideration ; “ For,” said she, “ this is the child of the inhabitant of the bath.” Her speech acted like a spell upon her



hearers : believing, in common with most Easterns, that every bath has its inhabitant (an efreet, or powerful genie, possessing considerable influence over the destiny of the family), the deluded people treated her with the greatest liberality, and never approached her but with fear during the three days' nursing, which is all the time an Eastern woman requires for her recovery after an accouchement. At the end of that period, the visitor contrived to secrete the jewels, and many other valuables belonging to her benefactress and family, and, with her infant, decamped, leaving the good people to lament their credulity. They never succeeded in obtaining any clue to her hiding-place.

The person who related to me this anecdote, told me also another, as follows :—

Not long since, the wife of a Magrabee set out, with her husband, on pilgrimage, bearing on her person costly jewels, generally well concealed ; but a beautiful string of very choice pearls, which she carried in a bag suspended by a string passing over her right shoulder and under her left arm, was by some means seen ; and before she had proceeded many miles from Cairo, she was waylaid, and stripped of her treasures. Her donkey-driver, who had quitted the caravan, and returned to his house in Cairo, was suspected of the robbery, but the guilt lay on others. The thieves who had the jewels took advantage of the suspicions formed to

his prejudice, and finding his house, buried a few of the pearls under the threshold of his door, and informed the superintendant of police that there was strong reason for believing that he possessed some of the lost jewels, adding, that he had been observed scraping the earth at his door in a suspicious manner. The secreted pearls were found, and the donkey-driver was arrested and bastinadoed; but no confession was elicited from him, for the poor fellow had nothing to disclose. In the meantime the informers took no care to avoid detection; upon which a shrewd fellow proposed that they should be all bastinadoed. They were immediately seized, and while under the *corbág* they all pleaded guilty, and readily criminated each other. Thus was the poor man revenged, and his innocence asserted; but that was not sufficient compensation for the many cruel lashes which had swollen his feet, and disabled him from following his usual avocations.

One more instance of impudent thieving occurs to me:—

A woman, with a basket on her head, was stooping to drink, balancing her burden cleverly, as all the Easterns do, and drinking from a rivulet by filling repeatedly her right hand. Another woman lifted the basket from her head without her knowledge, and placing it on her own, held it with her left hand, while she, too, drank from her right.

The first woman rising from her crouching posture, and finding herself light-headed, was exceedingly distressed by her loss, and complained bitterly. "Look at me," said the thief; "I never balance my basket without holding it; had you done so, you would never have lost yours." The unsuspecting woman confessed her error, and determined in future to follow such good advice.

To turn to a very different subject. I had yesterday an introduction to the Armenian bishop, who resides in this city. On my way I had some difficulties to encounter. It happened to be the last day of those devoted to the celebration of the Moolid en-Nebee (the festival of Mohammad's birthday), and I found myself most unexpectedly joining the procession of Sheykhs and attendants, en route for the house of the Sheykh el-Bekree, to assist in the performance of the Dóseh. For a description of the Moolid en-Nebee and the Dóseh, I refer you to my brother's 'Modern Egyptians.' The procession I witnessed yesterday was moving at a very rapid pace, and many of the persons composing it bore large flags, most of which were green. Once riding among them, there was no escape for me, and no possibility of turning back; so I pursued my course until I reached the Ezbe-keeyeh, where the wide space enabled me once more to be independent. Here was a very gay scene. Rows of tents of various colours, but

chiefly green, and decorated in a picturesque manner, were arranged on either side of the road bordering the Ezbekeeyeh; and there were several swings and whirligigs, but with no one to use them, for half the crowd was in the neighbourhood of the house of the Sheykh, and the other half hurrying towards it. There were also many fanciful erections of poles and cords hung with Arab lamps and decorated with coloured flags. The Muslims have borrowed some idea from the Frank decorations employed during the late wedding, and from some of the amusements also, and again a soaped pole is erected there, with a purse of money on the top, surmounted by the crescent and star. I was most glad to have fairly passed the crowd, and, joining my friends, to find myself on the way to the Armenian bishop's.

We found the good bishop seated in his winter-room, wrapped in a dark cloth pelisse lined with sable. He is a venerable looking person, with a remarkably intelligent and pleasing expression of countenance. He received us in a very amiable manner, and conversed agreeably on several subjects. While we were sitting with him, a priest entered the room and joined our party. He was one of the handsomest old men I have ever seen; tall and stately in person, and mild and dignified in bearing; and having a very long and perfectly white beard. Hearing the bell toll for the afternoon service, I



expressed a wish to attend it, and to see the church ; and, taking our leave of the bishop, who accompanied us to the edge of the mat, and bade us farewell as he took a hand of each, we entered the church before the arrival of the officiating priests. The church is a fine lofty saloon, with six windows on either side, and outside these windows are screens of ornamental ironwork, which have a solid and handsome appearance ; indeed there is an air of *bien être* about the church and appendages which is peculiar in the East as applying to all religious establishments of the Armenians. A curtain was drawn before the altar, in the front of which hung a picture representing the Crucifixion, with the three Marys at the foot of the cross. Before this picture a single lamp burns night and day. The church is matted, and on either side are arranged parallel with each other a number of oblong mattresses on which the congregation kneel. Opposite to the altar, at the other end of the church, is a raised matted portion, on which chairs are placed. From the ceiling hang several large chandeliers and a multitude of small silver lamps. There is a profusion of ornament above and around the altar, consisting of wreaths of gilt flowers and leaves ; and gilt stars are scattered over a pale blue ground above the altar. The service was performed by two priests habited in cowls. It was chanted by them, assisted, or rather accompanied, by two boys,

each about ten years of age. The chanting was good, and the whole service was impressive. One of the officiating priests was the noble-looking person with the white beard whom we had left with the bishop when the bell had tolled for church. After the service he approached us, and politely gave me permission to accompany him behind the curtain which concealed the altar ; and I did so, leaving my shoes before stepping into their most holy place. Over the altar is hung a picture of the Virgin and the Infant Saviour, with a semi-circular glory above the picture. Before this picture also burns constantly a single lamp. In mentioning these pictures, I must remark, that the Armenians do not place upon them an undue value ; the bishop carefully explains to his congregation, that such representations are never, under any circumstances, to be considered objects of worship, and that they are only placed before them to remind them of those events which so nearly concern their salvation.

You probably know that the various Christian nations of the East much resemble the Muslims in their domestic life, and general manners and habits, and in many of their superstitions ; but this, I hope and expect, will not long continue to be the case. They are most willing to avail themselves of the benefit of European instruction ; and many of them, who have been my neighbours, have readily adopted

suggestions which I have offered with respect to the management of their children, the amelioration of whose condition is an object which I have much at heart. It is far from being thus with the Muslims. Many of these have applied to me for medicines for themselves and their children; but their abominable and disgusting prejudices have generally prevented my being of any use to them in complying with their requests. How they sometimes provoke me in cases of this kind, you may imagine from the following instance:—

A woman who frequently amused me by telling me of the quaint and clever sayings of her sister's little boy, and often mentioned the doting affection of both his parents for their only child, after visiting them recently, came to me in great distress to inform me that she had found the poor boy suffering severely from an abscess in one of his ears, and that his right eye was closed. On the following day he was sent to me, that I might see him, and tell his mother what medicine he required. How can I ever forget the sickening, but most affecting sight! The bright boy of my imagination was, I am grieved to say, almost a disgusting object; a poor creature one could not touch but with the hope of saving him: not only diseased, but unwashed, and with every appearance of having been in that miserable state for many weeks. He was quiet from weakness, and in a

state of half-sleepy unconsciousness ; his languid head resting heavily on the shoulder of his anxious nurse, whose cleanly appearance presented a painful contrast to his wretched condition. I prepared for him some medicine, and gave some eye-water which has always been the means of removing disease wherever we have applied it, if used before ophthalmia had grown into blindness ; only requiring that the eye and ear should be washed repeatedly, and the whole body daily. Two days after, I sent to inquire how my remedies had succeeded ; when I found, to my dismay, that a film had formed over the suffering eye. "Have they applied the lotion?" was my anxious inquiry. "Once only," my messenger replied ; "for the child would not suffer them to use it." I was grieved and disappointed, knowing how much good my application had always, with the blessing of God, effected. I spoke as strongly as a mother who knows the value of children could speak, and begged that the foolish parents would take the help that was offered to save their child ; but all to no purpose. His eye is gone ; and the abscess in his ear produces a drain upon his already enfeebled constitution, which he has no stamina to meet, and I can only look forward and hope for the hour when death will put a period to his sufferings.

Since I wrote the above, I have heard of the child's death. Poor little fellow ! he dreaded



much the darkness of the grave; and a week before his death, affectingly said to his mother, "I am going to die, but do not put me in the grave, I shall be afraid to be there alone: it is quite dark." His mother remembered his dying words, and when his lifeless body was laid in the small chamber of the tomb belonging to his family, his mother sat beside him, and when entreated to leave the place, and suffer the entrance to be closed, she touchingly refused to move, saying, "I shall pass the night with my child; he is afraid to be alone." Such a conviction was not unreasonable on her part; for the Muslims do not believe that the soul is at once separated from the body, and call the first night after burial, "Leylet el Wahdeh," or "The Night of Solitude."

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## LETTER XI.

March, 1846.

I MENTIONED in my last letter the widow of Isma'eel Páshá, whose illness had occasioned so much uneasiness to Mohammad 'Alee. She is now convalescent; but the old lady whom I also mentioned as being ill at the same time, who was once his favourite wife, died about a fortnight since. She had suffered extremely during a period of two years. On the morning of her death, Nezleh Hánum was roused by screams which proceeded from the palace of the invalid, adjoining her own palace; for the Kasr en Neel is composed of several distinct mansions, occupied by some of the elders of the Páshá's Hareem and their attendants. It was the funeral cry which had been raised by the slaves of the dying sufferer while she was yet alive. Nezleh Hánum went to her chamber, commanded silence, and directed the use of restoratives, until the object of her solicitude breathed her last. The shrieks of the immediate attendants were heard throughout the Kasr, and the death-cry which went forth from the inmates of the several palaces was heard at a considerable distance.

In the morning, some time before her death, eunuchs were dispatched to desire the attendance of every person of rank in Cairo, that the grandees and their hareems might join the funeral procession. By twelve o'clock, the Kasr was filled by those persons; the hareems being drest in the mourning colours of the country, black and blue. During the time occupied in requiring their attendance, the relations and slaves of the late lady were occupied in breaking the beautiful china and glass which had been the property of the deceased. The destruction after a death is generally proportioned to the possessions of the deceased; therefore in that case it was very extensive. The body was clad in very costly apparel, and wrapped in a Cashmere shawl: a bier was then brought, in which it was laid, and another Cashmere shawl was placed over the bier, the head of which was surmounted by a splendid diamond tiara. The grandees, on foot, followed the chanters of the Kur-an and the other persons who headed the procession: their ladies rode behind the bier on high donkeys, with a large crowd of other females. Eleven buffaloes were driven before the bier, to be slaughtered, and divided among the poor. A considerable number of camels followed, bearing bread and water for charitable distribution; and the excitement of the crowds who attended to partake of the bounty can scarcely be conceived. Such a

funeral is a jubilee to the poor. The eunuchs who formed part of the procession bore sprinkling bottles containing scented waters, and censers in which were burning frankincense and other perfumes.

The interment took place in a vault in the Páshá's burial-place. A rich Cashmere shawl was spread in the vault, another was doubled as a pillow ; and the body was taken out of the bier, and laid upon them. A third Cashmere shawl was placed over it, entirely covering the costly dress of the corpse. The mourners then quitted the vault, uttering the most piercing shrieks, and the door was closed.

The deceased was named "Shems-i-Safa," which admits of several interpretations ; but the meaning intended is "Sun of Happiness." Some say that, though she enjoyed the title and rights of a wife, she was not a wife in the strict legal sense of the term.

The funeral ceremonies of Modern Egypt strongly remind me of scenes depicted in many of the ancient tombs in this country : but I make this remark without knowing much of Egyptian antiquities except from books and drawings and museums.

I have much enjoyed looking over the very choice collection of antiquities and curiosities selected by our English resident physician, Dr. Abbott. I am not about to attempt a general



description of them ; but some are so very curious, and others so beautiful, that I should imagine an antiquary would find nothing so interesting in Cairo. To begin with the most antique : there are a necklace and a pair of ear-rings which were found in a jar at Dendara, and are believed to be the oldest articles of the kind in the world : they are made of gold-leaf, similar to that upon which hieroglyphics are usually found stamped : attached to the centre are three pendants of lapis lazuli, and two beads of blue glass, with an amethyst bead capped at each end with gold : but what is particularly remarkable is, that the name of Menes, the first king of Egypt, is stamped upon each of the ear-rings, and upon eight oval plates which decorate the necklace. A still more remarkable object in the same collection is a ring of uncommon interest, the well-authenticated signet-ring of Cheops. Antiquary or not, I believe that no one can see, or much more handle, that ring, without experiencing a thrill of pleasure that such a relic of the age of the Founder of the Great Pyramid should have been preserved. It is of fine gold, weighing nearly three sovereigns, and bearing the name of Shofu, the Suphis of Manetho, and the Cheops of the Greeks. This precious antique is in the highest state of preservation. It was found in a tomb near the pyramids El-Geezeh. The style of the hieroglyphics is in perfect accordance with those in the tombs about

the Great Pyramid, and all the details are minutely attended to and beautifully executed. There is also, among the more ancient of the curiosities in this most rare collection, a bracelet of twisted gold, terminating with the form of the lotus-flower, very much resembling the picturesque bracelets worn by the ladies of Egypt in the present day, only that it is, strange to say, of superior workmanship. I was much pleased also with two beautiful gold figures of birds with human heads and extended wings, representing the departing soul. Some winged orbs, too, symbols of the good genius, are remarkable for the fine taste and exquisite workmanship displayed in their formation. Some little figures in lapis lazuli are curious specimens of beautiful ancient carving; and two bronze lizards excited my admiration most especially: they are in as perfect preservation as though finished but yesterday, and wonderfully true to nature.

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## A P P E N D I X.

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\* \* \* The Editor of the 'Monthly Volume' is happy in the opportunity of furnishing some interesting Illustrations of Mrs. POOLE'S Letters, from the Notes to the valuable edition of 'The Thousand and One Nights,' by E. W. LANE, Esq.

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### I.—DESCRIPTION OF THE VEILS OF ARAB WOMEN.

(See page 6.)

THE izár, or eezár (for the word is written in two different ways) is a piece of drapery commonly worn by Arab women when they appear in public. It is about two yards or more in width (according to the height of the wearer), and three yards in length: one edge of it being drawn from behind, over the upper part of the head and the forehead, and secured by a band sewed inside, the rest hangs down behind and on each side to the ground, or nearly so, and almost entirely envelops the person; the two ends being held so as nearly to meet in front. Thus it conceals every other part of the dress excepting a small portion of a very loose gown (which is another of the articles of walking or riding



apparel) and the face-veil. It is now generally made of white calico, but a similar covering of black silk for the married, and of white silk for the unmarried, is now worn by females of the higher and middle classes, and is called a “ḥabarah.”

It appears that the kind of face-veil mentioned in the same passage (in Arabic, “ḵináă”) is a piece of muslin, about a yard or more in length, and somewhat less in width, a portion of which is placed over the head, beneath the izár, the rest hanging down in front, to the waist, or thereabout, and entirely concealing the face. I have often seen Arab women, particularly those of the Wahhábees, wearing veils of this kind composed of printed muslin, completely concealing their features, yet of sufficiently loose fabric to admit of their seeing their way. But the more common kind of Arab face-veil is a long strip of white muslin, or of a kind of black crape, covering the whole of the face excepting the eyes, and reaching nearly to the feet. It is suspended at the top by a narrow band, which passes up the forehead, and which is sewed, as are also the two upper corners of the veil, to a band that is tied round the head. This veil is called “burḵo’.” The black kind is often ornamented with gold coins, false pearls, &c., attached to the upper part. It is not so genteel as the white veil, unless for a lady in mourning.

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## II.—ON INFANCY AND EDUCATION.—(See page 20.)

In few cases are the Mohammadans so much fettered by the directions of their Prophet and other religious

instructors as in the rearing and educating of their children. In matters of the most trivial nature, religious precedents direct their management of the young. One of the first duties is, to wrap the new-born child in clean white linen, or in linen of some other colour; but not yellow. After this, some person [not a female] should pronounce the *adán*\* in the ear of the infant, because the Prophet did so in the ear of El-Ḥasan when Fátimēh gave birth to him; or he should pronounce the *adán* in the right ear, and the *iḵámeh* (which is nearly the same) in the left.†

It was formerly a custom of many of the Arabs, and perhaps is still among some, for the father to give a feast to his friends on seven successive days after the birth of a son; but that of a daughter was observed with less rejoicing. The general modern custom is, to give an entertainment only on the seventh day, which is called “*Yóm-es-Subooă*.” On this occasion, the mother, having left her bed, receives her guests; the child is exhibited to them; and they give presents of gold or silver coins, which are generally used to decorate the infant’s head-dress. The father entertains his friends in the evening.

On this day, or on the fourteenth, twenty-first, twenty-eighth, or thirty-fifth day after the birth, several religious ceremonies are required to be performed; but

\* The call to prayer, which is chanted from the *mád’nehs* (or *menarets*) of the mosques. It is as follows:—“God is most great!” (four times). “I testify that there is no deity but God!” (twice). “I testify that Moḥammad is God’s Apostle!” (twice). “Come to prayer!” (twice). “Come to security!” (twice). “God is most great!” (twice). “There is no deity but God!”

† *Nuzhet el-Mutaämmil wa-Murshid el-Mutaähhil*, section 9.

these are most approved if observed on the seventh day. One of these is the naming. I believe, however, that it is a more common custom to give the name almost immediately after the birth, or about three hours after. Astrologers were often consulted on this occasion; but the following directions are given on higher authority, and are generally observed :—“ The father shall give his son a good name,....not a name of self-praise, as Rasheed [Orthodox], Emeen [Faithful], &c.....The Prophet said, ‘ The names most approved by God are ‘Abd Allah [Servant of God] and ‘Abd Er-Raḥmān [Servant of the Compassionate], and such like.’ He also said, ‘ Give my name, but do not distinguish by my surname of relationship :’ but this precept, they say, respects his own lifetime,..because he was addressed, ‘ O Abu-l-Kásim!’ and now it is not disapproved; but some disapprove of uniting the name and surname, so as to call a person Moḥammad and Abu-l-Kásim. And if a son be called by the name of a prophet, it is not allowable to abuse or vilify him, unless the person so named be facing his reproacher, who should say, ‘ Thou’ [without mentioning his name]: and a child named Moḥammad or Aḥmad should be [especially] honoured.....The Prophet said, ‘ There is no people holding a consultation at which there is present one whose name is Moḥammad or Aḥmad, but God blesseth all that assembly :’ and again he said, ‘ Whoever nameth his child by my name, or by that of any of my children or my companions, from affection to me or to them, God (whose name be exalted) will give him in Paradise what eye hath not seen nor ear heard.’ And a son should not be named King of kings, or Lord of lords; nor should a man take a sur-

name of relationship from the name of the eldest of his children; nor take any such surname before a child is born to him.”\*—The custom of naming children after prophets, or after relations or companions of Moḥammad, is very common. No ceremony is observed on account of the naming.

On the same day, however, two practices which I am about to mention are prescribed to be observed; though, as far as my observations and inquiries allow me to judge, they are generally neglected by the modern Muslims. The first of these is a sacrifice. The victim is called *’aḳeeḳah*. It should be a ram or goat; or two such animals should be sacrificed for a son, and one for a daughter. This rite is regarded by Ibn Ḥambal as absolutely obligatory: he said, “If a father sacrifice not for his son, and he [the son] die, that son will not intercede for him on the day of judgment.” The founders of the three other principal sects regard it in different and less important lights, though Moḥammad slew an *’aḳeeḳah* for himself after his prophetic mission. The person should say, on slaying the victim, “O God, verily this *’aḳeeḳah* is a ransom for my son such a one; its blood for his blood, and its flesh for his flesh, and its bone for his bone, and its skin for his skin, and its hair for his hair. O God, make it a ransom for my son from Hell fire.” A bone of the victim should not be broken.† The midwife should receive a leg of it. It should be cooked without previously cutting off any portion of it; and part of it should be given in alms.—After this should be performed the other ceremony above alluded to,

\* Nuzhet el-Mutaāmmil wa-Murshid el-Mutaahhil, section 9.

† Compare Exodus xiii. 13, and xii. 46.



which is this :—It is a sunneh ordinance, incumbent on the father, to shave, or cause to be shaved, the head of his child, and to give, in alms to the poor, the weight of the hair in gold or silver. This should also be done for a proselyte.\* On the subsequent occasions of shaving the head of a male child (for the head of a male is frequently shaven), a tuft of hair is generally left on the crown, and commonly, for several years, another also over the forehead.

Circumcision is most approved if performed on the same day :† but the observance of this rite is generally delayed until the child has attained the age of five or six years, and sometimes several years later. I shall therefore delay mentioning the ceremonies with which it is celebrated.

The Muslims rightly regard a child as a trust committed by God to its parents, who, they hold, are responsible for the manner in which they bring it up, and will be examined on this subject on the day of judgment. But they further venture to say, that “the first who will lay hold of a man on the day of judgment will be his wife and children, who [if he have been deficient in his duty to them] will present themselves before God, and say, ‘O our Lord, take for us our due from him ; for he taught us not that of which we were ignorant, and he fed us with forbidden food, and we knew not :’ and their due will be taken from him.”‡ By this is meant, that a certain proportion of the good works which the man may have done, and his children and wife neglected,

\* Nuzhet el-Mutaämmil, &c., section 9 ; and Mishkát el-Maṣábeeh, vol. ii. pp. 315, 316.

† Nuzhet el-Mutaämmil, &c., *loco laudato*.

‡ Ibid.

will be set down to their account ; or that a similar proportion of their evil works will be transferred to *his* account.

The mother is enjoined by the law to give suck to her child two full years, unless she have her husband's consent to shorten the period, or to employ another nurse. " For suckling the child, a virtuous woman, who eateth only what is lawful, should be chosen ; for the unlawful [food] will manifest its evil in the child : as the Prophet . . . . said, ' Giving suck altereth the tempers.' But it is recommended by the sunneh that the mother herself suckle the child ; for it is said in a tradition, ' There is nothing better for a child than its mother's milk.' ' If thou wouldst try,' it is added, ' whether a child be of an ingenuous disposition in its infancy, or not, order a woman who is not its mother to suckle it after its mother has done so ; and if it drink of the milk of the woman who is not its mother, it is not of an ingenuous disposition.' "\*

Children, being regarded by Muslim parents as enviable blessings, are, to them, objects of the most anxious solicitude. To guard them from the supposed influence of the envious or evil eye, they have recourse to various expedients. When they are taken abroad, they are usually clad in a most slovenly manner, and left unwashed, or even purposely smeared with dirt ; and as a further precaution, a fantastic cap is often put upon the child's head, or its head-dress is decorated with one or more coins, a feather, a gay tassel, or a written charm or two sewed up in leather or encased in gold or silver, or some other appendage to attract the eye, that so the

\* Nuzhet el-Mutaämmil, &c., *loco laudato*.

infant itself may pass unnoticed. If a person express his admiration of another's child otherwise than by some pious ejaculation, as, for instance, by praising its Creator (with the exclamation of "Subhána-lláh!" or, "Má sháa-lláh!" &c.) or invoking a blessing on the Prophet, he fills the mind of the parent with apprehension; and recourse is had to some superstitious ceremony to counteract the dreaded influence of his envious glance. The children of the poor are less exposed to this imaginary danger from their unattractive appearance: they generally have little clothing, or none whatever, and are extremely dirty. It is partly with the view of protecting them from the evil eye, that those of the rich are so long confined to the harem: there they are petted and pampered for several years; at least until they are of age to go to school; but most of them are instructed at home.

The children of the Muslims are taught to show to their fathers a degree of respect which might be deemed incompatible with the existence of a tender mutual affection; but I believe that this is not the case. The child greets the father in the morning by kissing his hand, and then usually stands before him in a respectful attitude, with the left hand covered by the right, to receive any order or to await his permission to depart; but after the respectful kiss, is often taken on the lap. After the period of infancy, the well-bred son seldom sits in the presence of his father; but during that period he is generally allowed much familiarity. A Syrian merchant, who was one of my near neighbours in Cairo, had a child of exquisite beauty, commonly supposed to be his daughter, whom, though he was a most bigoted

Muslim, he daily took with him from his private house to his shop. The child followed him, seated upon an ass, before a black slave ; and, until about six years old, was dressed like most young ladies, but without a face-veil. The father then thinking that the appearance of taking about with him a daughter of that age was scandalous, dressed his pet as a boy, and told his friends that the female attire had been employed as a protection against the evil-eye ; girls being less coveted than boys. This indeed is sometimes done ; and it is possible that such might have been the case in this instance ; but I was led to believe that it was not so. A year after, I left Cairo : while I remained there, I continued to see the child pass my house as before ; but always in boy's clothing.

It is not surprising that the natives of Arabian countries, where a very trifling expense is required to rear the young, should be generally desirous of a numerous offspring. A motive of self-interest conduces forcibly to cherish this feeling in a wife ; for she is commonly esteemed by her husband in proportion to her fruitfulness ; and a man is seldom willing to divorce a wife, or to sell a slave, who has borne him a child. A similar feeling also induces in both parents a desire to obtain offspring, and renders them at the same time resigned to the loss of such of their children as die in tender age. This feeling arises from their belief of certain services, of greater moment than the richest blessings this world can bestow, which children who die in infancy are to render to their parents. The Prophet is related to have said, "The infant children [of the Muslims] shall assemble at the scene of judgment on the day of the



general resurrection, when all creatures shall appear for the reckoning, and it will be said to the angels, 'Go ye with these into Paradise:' and they will halt at the gate of Paradise, and it will be said to them, 'Welcome to the offspring of the Muslims! enter ye Paradise: there is no reckoning to be made with you:' and they will reply, 'Yea, and our fathers and our mothers:' but the guardians of Paradise will say, 'Verily your fathers and mothers are not with you because they have committed faults and sins for which they must be reckoned with and inquired of.' Then they will shriek and cry at the gate of Paradise with a great cry; and God (whose name be exalted, and who is all-knowing respecting them) will say, 'What is this cry?' It will be answered, 'O our Lord, the children of the Muslims say, We will not enter Paradise but with our fathers and our mothers.' Whereupon God (whose name be exalted) will say, 'Pass among them all, and take the hands of your parents, and introduce them into Paradise.' The children who are to have this power are such as are born of believers, and die without having attained to the knowledge of sin; and according to one tradition, one such child will introduce his parents into Paradise. [Such infants only are to enter Paradise; for, of the children who die in infancy, those of believers alone are they who would believe if they grew to years of discretion.] On the same authority it is said, "When a child of the servant [of God] dies, God (whose name be exalted) saith to the angels, 'Have ye taken the child of my servant?' They answer, 'Yea.' He saith, 'Have ye taken the child of his heart?' They reply, 'Yea.' He asketh them, 'What did my servant say?' They answer, 'He

praised thee, and said, Verily to God we belong, and verily unto Him we return!’ Then God will say, ‘Build for my servant a house in Paradise, and name it the House of Praise.’” To these traditions, which I find related as proofs of the advantages of marriage, the following anecdote, which is of a similar nature, is added. A certain man who would not take a wife, awoke one day from his sleep, and demanded to be married, saying, as his reason, “I dreamt that the resurrection had taken place, and that I was among the beings collected at the scene of judgment, but was suffering a thirst that stopped up the passage of my stomach; and lo, there were youths passing through the assembly, having in their hands ewers of silver and cups of gold, and giving drink to one person after another; so I stretched forth my hand to one of them, and said, ‘Give me to drink; for thirst overpowereth me:’ but they answered, ‘Thou hast no child among us: we give drink only to our fathers.’ I asked them, ‘Who are ye?’ They replied, ‘We are the deceased infant children of the Muslims.’”<sup>\*</sup> Especial rewards in heaven are promised to mothers. “When a woman conceives by her husband,” said the Prophet, “she is called in heaven a martyr [*i. e.* she is ranked as a martyr in dignity]; and her labour in child-bed, and her care for her children, protect her from hell-fire.”<sup>†</sup>

“When the child begins to speak, the father should teach him first the *kelimeh* [or profession of faith], ‘There is no deity but God: [Mohammad is God’s apostle]’—he should dictate this to him seven times.

<sup>\*</sup> *Nuzhet el-Mutaämmil*, &c., section 2.

<sup>†</sup> *Idem*, section 7.

Then he should instruct him to say, 'Wherefore, exalted be God, the King, the Truth! There is no deity but He, the Lord of the honourable throne.'\* He should teach him also the Throne-verse,† and the closing words of the Hashr, 'He is God, beside whom there is no deity, the King, the Holy,' " &c. ‡

As soon as a son is old enough, his father should teach him the most important rules of decent behaviour: placing some food before him, he should order him to take it with the right hand (the left being employed for unclean purposes), and to say, on commencing, "In the name of God;" to eat what is next to him, and not to hurry, nor spill any of the food upon his person or dress. He should teach him that it is disgusting to eat much. He should particularly condemn to him the love of gold and silver, and caution him against covetousness as he would against serpents and scorpions; and forbid his spitting in an assembly, and committing any similar breach of good manners, talking much, turning his back upon another, standing in an indolent attitude, and speaking ill of any person to another. He should keep him from bad companions, teach him the Ḳur-án and all requisite divine and prophetic ordinances, and instruct him in the arts of swimming and archery, and in some virtuous trade; for trade is a security from poverty. He should also command him to endure patiently the chastisements of his teacher. In one tradition it is said, "When a boy attains the age of six years he should be disciplined; and when he attains to nine years he should

\* Ḳur-án, ch. xxiii. v. 117.

† "God! there is no deity but He," &c., to the words, "He is the High, the Great."—Idem, chap. ii. v. 256.

‡ Nuzhet el-Mutaämmil, &c., section 9.

be put in a separate bed ; and when he attains to ten years he should be beaten for [neglecting] prayer : ” in another tradition, “ Order your children to pray at seven [years], and beat them for [neglecting] it at ten, and put them in separate beds.”\*

Circumcision is generally performed before the boy is submitted to the instruction of the schoolmaster.† Previously to the performance of this rite, he is, if belonging to the higher or middle rank of society, usually paraded about the neighbourhood of his parents’ dwelling, gaily attired, chiefly with female habits and ornaments, but with a boy’s turban on his head, mounted on a horse, preceded by musicians, and followed by a group of his female relations and friends. This ceremony is observed by the great with much pomp and with sumptuous feasts. El-Jabartee mentions a fête celebrated on the occasion of the circumcision of a son of the Kádee of Cairo, in the year of the Flight 1179 (A.D. 1766), when the grandees and chief merchants and ’ulama of the city sent him such abundance of presents that the magazines of his mansion were filled with rice and butter and honey and sugar ; the great hall, with coffee ; and the middle of the court, with fire-wood : the public were amused for many days by players and performers of various kinds ; and when the youth was paraded through the streets he was attended by numerous memlooks with their richly caparisoned horses and splendid arms and armour and military band, and by a number of other youths who, from compliment to him, were circum-

\* Nuzhet el-Mutaämmil, &c., section 9.

† A similar custom is mentioned in a note appended to the account of circumcision, in vol. i. chap. ii. of Mr. Lane’s work on the Modern Egyptians.



cised afterwards with him. This latter custom is usual on such occasions; and so also is the sending of presents, such as those above mentioned, by friends, acquaintances, and tradespeople. At a fête of this kind, when the Khaleefeh El-Muktedir circumcised five of his sons, the money that was scattered in presents amounted to six hundred thousand pieces of gold, or about 300,000*l*. Many orphans were also circumcised on the same day, and were presented with clothes and pieces of gold.\* The Khaleefeh above mentioned was famous for his magnificence. At the more approved entertainments which are given in celebration of a circumcision, a recital of the whole of the *Kur-án*, or a *zikr*, is performed: at some others, male or female public dancers perform in the court of the house, or in the street before the door.

Few of the children of the Arabs receive much instruction in literature, and still fewer are taught even the rudiments of any of the higher sciences; but there are numerous schools in their towns, and one at least in almost every moderately large village. The former are mostly attached to mosques and other public buildings, and, together with those buildings, endowed by princes or other men of rank, or wealthy tradesmen. In these, the children are instructed either gratis or for a very trifling weekly payment, which all parents, excepting those in indigent circumstances, can easily afford. The schoolmaster generally teaches nothing more than to read, and to recite by heart the whole of the *Kur-án*. After committing to memory the first chapter of the sacred volume, the boy learns the rest in the inverse

\* *Mir-át ez-Zemán*, events of the year 302.

order of their arrangement, as they generally decrease in length. Writing and arithmetic are usually taught by another master ; and grammar, rhetoric, versification, logic, the interpretation of the *Kur-án*, and the whole system of religion and law, with all other knowledge deemed useful, which seldom includes the mere elements of mathematics, are attained by studying at a collegiate mosque, and at no expense ; for the professors receive no pay either from the students, who are mostly of the poorer classes, or from the funds of the mosque.

The wealthy often employ for their sons a private tutor ; and, when he has taught them to read, and to recite the *Kur-án*, engage for them a writing-master, and then send them to the college. But among this class polite literature is more considered than any other branch of knowledge, after religion. Such an acquaintance with the works of some of their favourite poets as enables a man to quote them occasionally in society, is regarded by the Arabs as essential to a son who is to mix in genteel company ; and to this acquirement is often added some skill in the art of versification, which is rendered peculiarly easy by the copiousness of the Arabic language, and by its system of inflexion. These characteristics of their noble tongue (which are remarkably exhibited by the custom, common among the Arabs, of preserving the same rhyme throughout a whole poem), while on the one hand they have given an admirable freedom to the compositions of men of true poetic genius, have on the other hand mainly contributed to the degradation of Arabic poetry. To an Arab of some little learning it is almost as easy to speak in verse as in prose ; and hence he often intersperses his prose writings, and not unfre-

quently his conversation, with indifferent verses, of which the chief merit often consists in puns, or in an ingenious use of several words nearly the same in sound, but differing in sense.

One more duty of a father to a son I should here mention : it is, to procure for him a wife as soon as he has arrived at a proper age. This age is decided by some to be twenty years ; though many young men marry at an earlier period. It is said, “ When a son has attained the age of twenty years, his father, if able, should marry him, and then take his hand, and say, ‘ I have disciplined thee, and taught thee, and married thee : I now seek refuge with God from thy mischief in the present world and the next.’ ” To enforce this duty the following tradition is urged : “ When a son attains to the age of puberty, and his father does not marry him, and yet is able to do so, if the youth commit an improper act in consequence, the sin of it is between the two”—or, as in another report,—“ on the father.”\* The same is held to be the case with respect to a daughter who has attained the age of twelve years.†

The female children of the Arabs are seldom taught even to read. Though they are admissible at the daily schools in which the boys are instructed, very few parents allow them the benefit of this privilege ; preferring, if they give them any instruction of a literary kind, to employ a sheykhah (or learned woman) to teach them at home. She instructs them in the forms of prayer, and teaches them to repeat by heart a few chapters of the

\* Nuzhet el-Mutaämmil, &c., section 9 ; and Mishkát el-Maşábeeh, vol. ii. p. 86.

† Mishkat el-Maşábeeh, *ibid.*

Ḳur-án; very rarely the whole book. Parents are indeed recommended to withhold from their daughters some portions of the Ḳur-án; to teach them the Soorat en-Noor [or 24th chapter], and keep from them the Soorat Yoosuf [12th chapter]; on account of the story of Ze-leekha and Yoosuf in the latter, and the prohibitions and threats and mention of punishments contained in the former.\*

Needle-work is not so rarely, but yet not generally, taught to Arab girls: the spindle frequently employs those of the poorer classes; and some of them learn to weave. The daughters of persons of the middle and higher ranks are often instructed in the art of embroidery, and in other ornamental work, which are taught in schools and in private houses. Singing, and playing upon the lute, which were formerly not uncommon female accomplishments among the wealthy Arabs, are now almost exclusively confined, like dancing, to professional performers and a few of the slaves in the hareems of the great: it is very seldom now that any musical instrument is seen in the hand of an Arab lady, excepting a kind of drum called darabukkeh, and a *ṭár* (or tambourine), which are found in many hareems, and are beaten with the fingers.† Some care, however, is bestowed by the ladies in teaching their daughters what they consider an elegant gait and carriage, as well as various alluring and voluptuous arts with which to increase the attachment of their future husbands.

\* Nuzhet el-Mutaämmil, &c., section 6.

† See the Modern Egyptians, vol. ii. chap. xviii.



## III.—ON MUSLIM SAINTS, OR DEVOTEES.

(See page 28.)

As an illustration of this passage it is necessary that the reader should be acquainted with the remarkable opinions which the Arabs entertain with respect to the offices and supernatural powers of their saints. Such matters form an important part of the mysteries of the Darweeshes, and are but imperfectly known to the generality of the Muslims.

The distinguished individuals above mentioned are known by the common appellation of “Welees,” or particular favourites of God. The more eminent among them compose a mysterious hierarchical body, whose government respects the whole human race, infidels as well as believers ; but whose power is often exercised in such a manner that the subjects influenced by it know not from what person or persons its effects proceed. The general governor or coryphæus of these holy beings is commonly called the “Kutb,” which literally signifies a “pole,” or an “axis,” and is metaphorically used to signify a “chief,” either in a civil or political, or in a spiritual sense. The Kutb of the saints is distinguished by other appellations : he is called “Kutb el-Ghós,” or “—— el Ghóth” (the Kutb of Invocation for Help), &c. ; and simply, “El-Ghós.”\* The orders under the rule of this chief are called “’Omud (or Owtád), Akhyár, Abdál, Nujaba, and Nukaba :” I name them according

\* D’Ohsson (tome i. pp. 315 and 316) asserts the Kutb to be the chief minister of the Ghós, and gives an account somewhat different from that which I offer of the orders under his authority ; but perhaps the Turkish Darweeshes differ from the Arab in their tenets on this subject.

to their precedence.\* Perhaps to these should be added an inferior order called “Aş-háb ed-Darak,” *i. e.* “watchmen,” or “overseers.” The members are not known as such to their inferior, unenlightened fellow-creatures; and are often invisible to them. This is more frequently the case with the Kuṭb, who, though generally stationed at Mekkeh, on the roof of the Kaabeh, is never visible there, nor at any of his other favourite stations or places of resort; yet his voice is often heard at these places. Whenever he and the saints under his authority mingle among ordinary men, they are not distinguished by any dignified appearance, but are always humbly clad. These, and even inferior saints, are said to perform astonishing miracles, such as flying in the air, passing unhurt through fire, swallowing fire, glass, &c., walking upon water, transporting themselves in a moment of time to immense distances, supplying themselves and others with food in desert places. Their supernatural power they are supposed to obtain by a life of the most exalted piety, and especially by constant self-denial, accompanied with the most implicit reliance upon God, by the services of good genii, and, as many believe, by the knowledge and utterance of “the most great name” of God. A miracle performed by a saint is distinguished

\* It is said that “the Nuḳaba are three hundred; the Nujaba, seventy; the Abdál, forty; the Akhyár, seven; the 'Omud, four; the Ghós [as before mentioned] is one. The Nuḳaba reside in El-Gharb [Northern Africa to the west of Egypt]; the Nujaba, in Egypt; the Abdál, in Syria; the Akhyár travel about the earth; the 'Omud, in the corners of the earth; the abode of the Ghós is at Mekkeh. In an affair of need, the Nuḳaba implore relief for the people; then, the Nujaba; then, the Abdál; then, the Akhyár; then, the 'Omud; and if their prayer be not answered, the Ghós implores, and his prayer is answered.” (El-Is-hákee's History, preface.)—This statement, I find, rests on the authority of a famous saint of Baghdád, Aboo Bekr El-Kettánee, who died at Mekkeh, in the year of the Flight 322. (Mir-át ez-Zemán, events of the year above mentioned.)

by the term “karámeh” from one performed by a prophet, which is called “moajizeh.”

El-Khidr and Ilyás (or Elias), of whom I have before had occasion to speak, are both believed to have been Kuṭbs, and the latter is called in the K̄ur-án an apostle ; but it is disputed whether the former was a prophet or merely a welee. Both are said to have drunk of the Fountain of Life, and to be in consequence still living ; and Ilyás is commonly believed to invest the successive Kuṭbs. The similarity of the miracles ascribed to the Kuṭbs, and those performed by Elias or Elijah, I have remarked in a former work.\* Another miraele, reminding us of the mantle of Elijah in the hands of his successor, may here be mentioned.—A saint who was the Kuṭb of his time, dying at Toonus (or Tunis), left his clothes in trust to his attendant, Moḥammad El-Ashwam, a native of the neighbouring regency of Tripoli (now called Tarábulus), who desired to sell these relics, but was counselled to retain them ; and accordingly, though high prices were bidden for them, made them his own by purchase. As soon as they became his property he was affected, we are told, with a divine eestasy, and endowed with miraculous powers.†

Innumerable miracles are related to have been performed by Muslim saints, and large volumes are filled with the histories of their wonderful lives. The author of the work from which the above story is taken, men-

\* See the Modern Egyptians.

† El-Jabartee's ‘History of Modern Egypt,’ vol. ii., obituary of the year 1201 (MS. in my possession).—The appellation of “the four Kuṭbs” is given in Egypt to the seyyid Ahmad Rifá’ah, the seyyid ‘Abd El-Kádir El-Geelánee, the seyyid Aḥmad El-Bedawee, and the seyyid Ibraheem Ed-Desookee, the founders of the four orders of darweeshes most celebrated among the Arabs, called Rifá’eeyeh, Kádireeyeh, Aḥ-medeeeyeh, and Baráhimeh.

tions, as a fact to be relied on, in an account of one of his ancestors, that, his lamp happening to go out one night while he was reading alone in the riwāk of the Jabart (of which he was the sheykh), in the great mosque El-Azhar, the forefinger of his right hand emitted a light which enabled him to continue his reading until his naķeeb had trimmed and lighted another lamp.\*

From many stories of a similar kind that I have read, I select the following as a fair specimen: it is related by a very celebrated saint, Ibraheem El-Khowwās.—“ I entered the desert [on pilgrimage to Mekkeh from El-'Erāk], and there joined me a man having a belt round his waist, and I said, ‘ Who art thou ? ’—He answered, ‘ A Christian ; and I desire thy company.’ We walked together for seven days, eating nothing ; after which he said to me, ‘ O monk of the Muslims, produce what thou hast in the way of refreshment ; for we are hungry : ’ so I said, ‘ O my God, disgrace me not before this infidel : ’ and lo, a tray, upon which were bread and broiled meat and fresh dates and a mug of water. We ate, and continued our journey seven days more ; and I then said to him, ‘ O monk of the Christians, produce what thou hast in the way of refreshment ; for the turn is come to thee : ’ whereupon he leaned upon his staff, and prayed ; and lo, two trays, containing double that which was on my tray. I was confounded, and refused to eat : he urged me, saying, ‘ Eat ; ’ but I did it not. Then said he, ‘ Be glad ; for I give thee two pieces of good news : one of them is, that I testify that there is no deity but God, and that Moħammad is God’s apostle : the other, that I said, O God, if there be worth in this servant, supply me

\* El-Jabartee’s History, vol. i., obituary of the year 1188.



with two trays:—so this is through thy blessing.’ We ate, and the man put on the dress of pilgrimage, and so entered Mekkeh, where he remained with me a year as a student; after which he died, and I buried him in [the cemetery] El-Maala.” “And God,” says the author from whom I take this story, “is all-knowing:” *i. e.* He alone knoweth whether it be strictly true: but this is often added to the narration of traditions resting upon high authority\*. The saint above mentioned was called “El-Khowwās” (or the maker of palm-leaf baskets, &c.) from the following circumstance, related by himself.—“I used,” said he, “to go out of the town [Er-Rei] and sit by a river on the banks of which was abundance of palm-leaves; and it occurred to my mind to make every day five baskets [kuffehs], and to throw them into the river, for my amusement, as if I were obliged to do so. My time was so passed for many days: at length, one day, I thought I would walk after the baskets, and see whither they had gone: so I proceeded awhile along the bank of the river, and found an old woman sitting sorrowful. On that day I had made nothing. I said to her, ‘Wherefore do I see thee sorrowful?’ She answered, ‘I am a widow: my husband died leaving five daughters, and nothing to maintain them; and it is my custom to repair every day to this river, and there come to me, upon the surface of the water, five baskets, which I sell, and by means of them I procure food; but to-day they have not come, and I know not what to do.’ Upon hearing this, I raised my head towards heaven, and said, ‘O my God, had I known that I had more than five children to maintain, I had laboured more diligently.’”

\* Mir-át ez-Zemán, events of the year 291.

He then took the old woman to his house, and gave her money and flour, and said to her, “Whenever thou wantest anything, come hither and take what may suffice you.”\*

An irresistible influence has often been exercised over the minds of princes and other great men by reputed saints. Many a Muslim Monarch has thus been incited (as the Kings of Christendom were by Peter the Hermit) to undertake religious wars, or urged to acts of piety and charity; or restrained from tyranny by threats of Divine vengeance to be called down upon his head by the imprecations of a welee. 'Alee, the favourite son of the Khaleefeh El-Ma-moon, was induced, for the sake of religion, to flee from the splendour and luxuries of his father's court, and, after the example of a self-denying devotee, to pass his life as a porter, in a state of the most abject poverty, at El-Başrah, fasting all the day, remaining without sleep at night in a mosque, and walking barefooted, until, under an accumulation of severe sufferings, he prematurely ended his days, dying on a mat. The honours which he refused to receive in life were paid to him after his death: his rank being discovered by a paper which he left, his corpse was anointed with camphor and musk and aloes, wrapped in fine linen of Egypt, and so sent to his distressed father at Baghdád.†

Self-denial I have before mentioned as one of the most important means by which to attain the dignity of a welee. A very famous saint, Esh-Shiblee, is said to have received from his father an inheritance of sixty

\* Mir-át ez-Zemán, events of the year 291.

† Same work, events of the year 218.

millions of deenárs (a sum incredible, and probably a mistake for sixty thousand, or for sixty million dirhems), besides landed property, and to have expended it all in charity : also, to have thrown into the Tigris seventy hundredweight of books, written by his own hand during a period of twenty years.\*

Sháh El-Karmánee, another celebrated saint, had a beautiful daughter, whom the Sultán of his country sought in marriage. The holy man required three days to consider his sovereign's proposal, and in the mean time visited several mosques, in one of which he saw a young man humbly occupied in prayer. Having waited till he had finished, he accosted him, saying, " My son, hast thou a wife ?" Being answered, " No," he said, " I have a maiden, a virtuous devotee, who hath learned the whole of the K̤ur-án, and is amply endowed with beauty. Dost thou desire her ?"—" Who," said the young man, " will marry me to such a one as thou hast described, when I possess no more than three dirhems ?" "*I will marry thee to her,*" answered the saint : " she is my daughter, and I am Sháh the son of Shujáá El-Karmánee : give me the dirhems that thou hast, that I may buy a dirhem's worth of bread, and a dirhem's worth of something savoury, and a dirhem's worth of perfume." The marriage-contract was performed ; but when the bride came to the young man, she saw a stale cake of bread placed upon the top of his mug ; upon which she put on her izár, and went out. Her husband said, " Now I perceive that the daughter of Sháh El-Karmánee is displeased with my poverty." She answered, " I did not withdraw from fear of poverty, but

\* Mir-át ez-Zemán, events of the year 334.

on account of the weakness of thy faith, seeing how thou layest by a cake of bread for the morrow.’\*’

One of my friends in Cairo, Abu-l-Kásim of Geelán, entertained me with a long relation of the mortifications and other means which he employed to attain the rank of a welee. These were chiefly self-denial and a perfect reliance upon Providence. He left his home in a state of voluntary destitution and complete nudity, to travel through Persia and the surrounding countries, and yet more distant regions if necessary, in search of a spiritual guide. For many days he avoided the habitations of men, fasting from daybreak till sunset, and then eating nothing but a little grass or a few leaves or wild fruits, till by degrees he habituated himself to almost total abstinence from every kind of nourishment. His feet, at first blistered, and cut by sharp stones, soon became callous; and in proportion to his reduction of food, his frame, contrary to the common course of nature, became (according to his own account) more stout and lusty. Bronzed by the sun, and with his black hair hanging over his shoulders (for he had abjured the use of the razor), he presented, in his nudity, a wild and frightful appearance; and, on his first approaching a town, was surrounded and pelted by a crowd of boys; he therefore retreated, and, after the example of our first parents, made himself a partial covering of leaves; and this he always after did on similar occasions; never remaining long enough in a town for his leafy apron to wither. The abodes of mankind he always passed at a distance, excepting when several days’ fast, while traversing an arid desert, compelled him to obtain a morsel

\* Nuzhet el-Mutaämmil, &c., section 4.



of bread or a cup of water from the hand of some charitable fellow-creature. One thing that he particularly dreaded was, to receive relief from a sinful man, or from a demon in the human form. In passing over a parched and desolate tract, where for three days he had found nothing to eat, not even a blade of grass, nor a spring from which to refresh his tongue, he became overpowered with thirst, and prayed that God would send him a messenger with a pitcher of water. "But," said he, "let the water be in a green Baghdádee pitcher, that I may know it to be from Thee, and not from the Devil; and when I ask the bearer to give me to drink, let him pour it over my head, that I may not too much gratify my carnal desire."—"I looked behind me," he continued, "and saw a man bearing a green Baghdádee pitcher of water, and said to him, 'Give me to drink;' and he came up to me, and poured the contents over my head, and departed! By Allah it was so!"—Rejoicing in this miracle, as a proof of his having attained to a degree of wiláyeh (or saintship), and refreshed by the water, he continued his way over the desert, more firm than ever in his course of self-denial, which, though imperfectly followed, had been the means of his being thus distinguished. But the burning thirst returned shortly after, and he felt himself at the point of sinking under it, when he beheld before him a high hill, with a rivulet running by its base. To the summit of this hill he determined to ascend, by way of mortification, before he would taste the water, and this point, with much difficulty, he reached at the close of day. Here standing, he saw approaching, below, a troop of horsemen, who paused at the foot of the hill, when their chief, who was fore-

most, called out to him by name, "O Abu-l-Kásim! O Geelánee! Come down and drink!"—but, persuaded by this that he was Iblees with a troop of his sons, the evil genii, he withstood the temptation, and remained stationary until the deceiver with his attendants had passed on, and were out of sight. The sun had then set; his thirst had somewhat abated; and he only drank a few drops. Continuing his wanderings in the desert, he found, upon a pebbly plain, an old man with a long white beard, who accosted him, asking of what he was in search. "I am seeking," he answered, "a spiritual guide; and my heart tells me that thou art the guide I seek." "My son," said the old man, "thou seest yonder a saint's tomb: it is a place where prayer is answered: go thither, enter it, and seat thyself: neither eat nor drink, nor sleep; but occupy thyself solely, day and night, in repeating silently, 'Lá iláha illa-lláh' (There is no deity but God); and let not any living creature see thy lips move in doing so; for among the peculiar virtues of these words is this, that they may be uttered without any motion of the lips. Go, and peace be on thee!"—"Accordingly," said my friend, "I went thither. It was a small square building, crowned by a cupola; and the door was open. I entered, and seated myself, facing the niche, and the oblong monument over the grave. It was evening, and I commenced my silent professions of the unity, as directed by my guide; and at dusk I saw a white figure seated beside me, as if assisting in my devotional task. I stretched forth my hand to touch it; but found that it was not a material substance; yet there it was: I saw it distinctly. Encouraged by this vision, I continued my task for three

nights and days without intermission, neither eating nor drinking, yet increasing in strength both of body and of spirit; and on the third day, I saw written upon the whitewashed walls of the tomb, and on the ground, and in the air, wherever I turned my eyes, “*Lá iláha illalláh* ;’ and whenever a fly entered the tomb, it formed these words in its flight. By Allah it was so! My object was now fully attained: I felt myself endowed with supernatural knowledge: thoughts of my friends and acquaintances troubled me not; but I knew where each of them was, in Persia, India, Arabia, and Turkey, and what each was doing. I experienced an indescribable happiness. This state lasted several years; but at length I was insensibly enticed back to worldly objects: I came to this country; my fame as a calligraphist drew me into the service of the government; and now see what I am, decked with pelisses and shawls, and with this thing [a diamond order] on my breast; too old, I fear, to undergo again the self-denial necessary to restore me to true happiness, though I have almost resolved to make the attempt.”—Soon after this conversation, he was deprived of his office, and died of the plague. He was well known to have passed several years as a wandering devotee; and his sufferings, combined with enthusiasm, perhaps disordered his imagination, and made him believe that he really saw the strange sights which he described to me; for there was an appearance of earnestness and sincerity in his manner, such as I thought could hardly be assumed by a conscious impostor.

Insanity, however, if not of a very violent and dangerous nature, is commonly regarded by Muslims as a quality that entitles the subject of it to be esteemed as

a saint ; being supposed to be the abstraction of the mind from worldly affairs, and its total devotion to God. This popular superstition is a fertile source of imposture ; for, a reputation for sanctity being so easily obtained and supported, there are numbers of persons who lay claim to it from motives of indolence and licentiousness, eager to receive alms merely for performing the tricks of madmen, and greedy of indulging in pleasures forbidden by the law ; such indulgences not being considered in their case as transgressions, but rather as indications of holy frenzy. From my own observation I should say that lunatics or idiots, or impostors, constitute the majority of the persons reputed to be saints among the Muslims of the present day ; and most of those who are not more than slightly tinged with insanity are dar-weeshes.

A reputed saint of this description, in Cairo, in whom persons of some education put great faith, affected to have a particular regard for me. He several times accosted me in an abrupt manner, acquainted me with the state of my family in England, and uttered incoherent predictions respecting me, all of which communications, excepting one which he qualified with an “in sháa-llah” (or “if it be the will of God”), I must confess, proved to be true ; but I must also state that he was acquainted with two of my friends who might have materially assisted him to frame these predictions, though they protested to me that they had not done so. The following extract from a journal which I kept in Cairo during my last visit to Egypt, will convey some idea of this person, who will serve as a picture of many of his fraternity.—To-day (Nov. 6th, 1834), as I was sitting



in the shop of the Básha's booksellers, a reputed saint, whom I have often seen here, came and seated himself by me, and began, in a series of abrupt sentences, to relate to me various matters respecting me, past, present, and to come. He is called the skeykh 'Alee el-Leysee. He is a poor man, supported by alms; tall and thin, and very dark, about thirty years of age, and wears nothing at present but a blue shirt and a girdle, and a padded red cap. "O Efendee," he said, "thou hast been very anxious for some days. There is a grain of anxiety remaining in thee yet. Do not fear. There is a letter coming to thee by sea, that will bring thee good news." He then proceeded to tell me of the state of my family, and that all were well excepting one, whom he particularized by description, and whom he stated to be then suffering from an intermittent fever. [This proved to be exactly true.] "This affliction," he continued, "may be removed by prayer; and the excellencies of the next night, the night of [*i. e.* preceding] the first Friday of the month of Regeb, of Regeb, the holy Regeb, are very great. I wanted to ask thee for something to-day; but I feared: I feared greatly. Thou must be invested with the wiláyeh [*i. e.* be made a welee]: the welees love thee; and the Prophet loves thee. Thou must go to the sheykh Muṣṭafa El-Munádec, and the sheykh El-Baháee.\* Thou must be a welee." He then took my right hand, in the manner commonly practised in the ceremony which admits a person a darweesh, and repeated the Fát'hah;† after which he added, "I have admitted thee my darweesh." Having next told me of

\* These are two very celebrated welees.

† The opening chapter of the K̲ur-án.

several circumstances relating to my family—matters of an unusual nature—with singular minuteness and truth, he added, “To-night, if it be the will of God, thou shalt see the Prophet in thy sleep, and El-Khidr and the seyyid El-Bedawee. This is Regeb, and I wanted to ask thee—but I feared—I wanted to ask of thee four piasters, to buy meat and bread, and oil and radishes. Regeb! Regeb! I have great offices to do for thee to-night.”—Less than a shilling for all he promised was little enough: I gave it him for the trouble he had taken; and he muttered many abrupt prayers for me.—In the following night, however, I saw in my sleep neither Moḥammad nor El-Khidr, nor the seyyid El-Bedawee, unless, like Nebuchadnezzar, I was unable, on awaking, to remember my dreams.

Some reputed saints of the more respectable class, to avoid public notice, wear the general dress and manners of their fellow-countrymen, and betray no love of ostentation in their acts of piety and self-denial; or live as hermits in desert places, depending solely upon Providence for their support, and are objects of pious and charitable visits from the inhabitants of near and distant places, and from casual travellers. Others distinguish themselves by the habit of a darweesh, or by other peculiarities, such as a long and loose coat (called dīk) composed of patches of cloth of various colours, long strings of beads hung upon the neck, a ragged turban, and a staff with shreds of cloth of different colours attached to the top; or obtain a reputation for miraculous powers by eating glass, fire, serpents, &c. Some of those who are insane, and of those who feign to be so, go about, even in crowded cities, in a state of perfect

nudity, and are allowed to commit, with impunity, acts of brutal sensuality which the law, when appealed to, should punish with death. Such practices are forbidden by the religion and law even in the cases of saints; but common and deeply-rooted superstition prevents their punishment. During the occupation of Egypt by the French, the Commander-in-chief, Menou, applied to the Sheykhs (or 'Ulama) of the city for their opinion "respecting those persons who were accustomed to go about in the streets in a state of nudity, crying out and screaming, and arrogating to themselves the dignity of wiláyeh, relied upon as saints by the generality of the people, neither performing the prayers of the Muslims nor fasting," asking whether such conduct was permitted by the religion, or contrary to the law. He was answered, "Conduct of this description is forbidden, and repugnant to our religion and law, and to our traditions." The French General thanked them for this answer, and gave orders to prevent such practices in future, and to seize every one seen thus offending; if insane, to confine him in the Máaristán (or hospital and lunatic asylum); and if not insane, to compel him either to relinquish his disgusting habits or to leave the city.\*—Of reputed saints of this kind, thus writes an enlightened poet, El-Bedree El-Hejázee :—

"Would that I had not lived to see every fool esteemed among men as a *Ḳuṭb*!

Their learned men take him as a patron; nay, even as Lord, in place of the Possessor of Heaven's throne.

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\* El-Jabartee's History, vol. iii., events of the month of Shaabán, 1215 (A.D. 1800—1801).

Forgetting God, they say, 'Such a one from all mankind can remove affliction.'

When he dies, they make for him a place of visitation, and strangers and Arabs hurry thither in crowds :

Some of them kiss his tomb, and some kiss the threshold of the door, and the very dust.

Thus do the idolaters act towards their images, hoping so to obtain their favour."

'These lines are quoted by El-Jabartee, in his account of a very celebrated modern saint, the seyyid 'Alee El-Bekree (events of Rabee' et-Tánee, 1214). A brief history of this person will not be here misplaced, as it will present a good illustration of the general character and actions of those insane individuals who are commonly regarded as saints.

The seyyid 'Alee El-Bekree was a mejzoob (or insane person) who was considered an eminent welee, and much trusted in : for several years he used to walk naked about the streets of Cairo, with a shaven face, bearing a long nebboot (or staff), and uttering confused language, which the people attentively listened to, and interpreted according to their desires and the exigencies of their states. He was a tall, spare man, and sometimes wore a shirt and a cotton skull-cap ; but he was generally barefooted and naked. The respect with which he was treated induced a woman, who was called the sheykhah Ammooneh, to imitate his example further than decency allowed : she followed him whithersoever he went, covered at first with her eezár (or large cotton veil thrown over the head and body), and muttering, like him, confused language. Entering private houses with him, she used to ascend to the hareems, and gained the faith of the women, who presented her with money and clothes, and



spread abroad that the sheykh ('Alee) had looked upon her, and affected her with religious frenzy, so that she had become a weleeyeh, or female saint. Afterwards, becoming more insane and intoxicated, she uncovered her face, and put on the clothing of a man; and thus attired she still accompanied the sheykh, and the two wandered about, followed by numbers of children and common vagabonds; some of whom also stripped off their clothes in imitation of the sheykh, and followed, dancing; their mad actions being attributed (like those of the woman) to religious frenzy, induced by his look or touch, which converted them into saints. The vulgar and young, who daily followed them, consequently increased in numbers; and some of them, in passing through the market-streets, snatched away goods from the shops, thus exciting great commotion wherever they went. When the sheykh sat down in any place, the crowd stopped, and the people pressed to see him and his mad companions. On these occasions the woman used to mount upon the maṣṭabah of a shop, or ascend a hillock, and utter disgusting language, sometimes in Arabic, and sometimes in Turkish, while many persons among her audience would kiss her hands to derive a blessing. After having persevered for some time in this course, none preventing them, the party entered one day the lane leading from the principal street of the city to the house of the Kádee, and were seized by a Turkish officer there residing, name Jaafar Káshif, who, having brought them into his house, gave the sheykh some food, and drove out the spectators, retaining the woman and the mejzoobs, whom he placed in confinement: he then liberated the sheykh 'Alee, brought out

the woman and the mejzooos and beat them, sent the woman to the Máristán, and there confined her, and set at large the rest, after they had prayed for mercy, and clothed themselves, and recovered from their intoxication. The woman remained awhile confined in the Máristán, and, when liberated, lived alone as a sheykhah, believed in by men and women, and honoured as a saint with visits and festivals.

The seyyid 'Alee, after he had thus been deprived of his companions and imitators, was constrained to lead a different kind of life. He had a cunning brother, who, to turn the folly of this saint to a good account, and fill his own purse (seeing how great faith the people placed in him, as the Egyptians are prone to do in such a case), confined him in his house, and clothed him, asserting that he had his permission to do so, and that he had been invested with the dignity of *Kuṭb*. Thus he contrived to attract crowds of persons, men and women, to visit him. He forbade him to shave his beard, which consequently grew to its full size; and his body became fat and stout from abundance of food and rest; for, while he went about naked, he was, as before mentioned, of a lean figure. During that period he used generally to pass the night wandering, without food, through the streets, in winter and summer. Having now servants to wait upon him, whether sleeping or waking, he passed his time in idleness, uttering confused and incoherent words, and sometimes laughing and sometimes scolding; and in the course of his idle loquacity he could not but let fall some words applicable to the affairs of some of his listening visitors, who attributed such expressions to his supernatural knowledge of the thoughts of their

hearts, and interpreted them as warnings or prophecies. Men and women, and particularly the wives of the grandees, flocked to him with presents and votive offerings, which enriched the coffers of his brother; and the honours which he received ceased not with his death. His funeral was attended by multitudes from every quarter. His brother buried him in the mosque of Esh-Sharāībee, in the quarter of the Ezbekeeyeh, made for him a maḵṣoorah (or railed enclosure) and an oblong monument over the grave, and frequently repaired thither with readers of the Ḳur-án, munshids to sing odes in his honour, flag-bearers, and other persons, who wailed and screamed, rubbed their faces against the bars of the window before his grave, and caught the air of the place in their hands to thrust it into their bosoms and pockets. Men and women came crowding together to visit his tomb, bringing votive offerings and wax candles, and eatables of various kinds to distribute for his sake to the poor.\*—The oblong monument over his grave, resembling a large chest, was covered, when I was in Cairo, with a black stuff ornamented by a line of words from the Ḳur-án, in white characters, surrounding it. A servant who accompanied me during my rides and walks used often to stop as we passed this tomb, and touch the wooden bars of the window above mentioned with his right hand, which he then kissed to obtain a blessing.

In most cases greater honour is paid to a reputed saint after his death than he receives in his life. A small, square, whitewashed building, crowned with a dome, is

\* El-Jabartee's History, vol. ii., obituary of the year 1207, and events of Reieb, 1200: and vol. iii., events of Rabeeʿ et-Tánee, 1214.

generally erected as his tomb, surrounding an oblong monument of stone, brick, or wood, which is immediately over the sepulchral vault. At least one such building forms a conspicuous object close by, or within, almost every Arab village; for the different villages, and different quarters of every town and city, have their respective patron saints, whose tombs are frequently visited, and are the scenes of periodical festivals, generally celebrated once in every year. The tombs of many very eminent saints are mosques; and some of these are large and handsome edifices, the monument being under a large and lofty dome, and surrounded by an enclosure of wooden railings, or of elegantly worked bronze. In these buildings also, and in some others, the monument is covered with silk or cotton stuff ornamented with words from the *Kur-án*, which form a band around it. Many buildings of the more simple kind erected in honour of saints, and some of the larger description, are mere cenotaphs, or cover only some relic of the person to whom they are dedicated. The tombs and cenotaphs or shrines of saints are visited by numerous persons, and on frequent occasions; most commonly on a particular day of the week. The object of the visitor, in general, is to perform some meritorious act, such as taking bread, or other food, or money, for the poor, or distributing water to the thirsty, on account of the saint, to increase his rewards in heaven, and at the same time to draw down a blessing on himself; or to perform a sacrifice of a sheep, goat, calf, or other animal, which he has vowed to offer, if blessed with some specific object of desire, or to obtain general blessings; or to implore the saints' intercession in some case of need. The flesh of the devoted animal



is given to the poor. The visitors also often take with them palm-branches, or sprigs of myrtle, or roses or other flowers, to lay upon the monument, as they do when they visit the tombs of their relations. The visitor walks round the monument, or its enclosure, from left to right, or with his left side towards it (as the pilgrims do round the Kaabeh), sometimes pausing to touch its four angles or corners with his right hand, which he then kisses; and recites the opening chapter of the *Kur-án* (the *Fát'hah*) standing before one or each of its four sides. Some visitors repeat also the chapter of *Yá-Seen* (the 36th), or employ a person to recite this, or even the whole of the *Kur-án*, for hire. The reciter afterwards declares that he transfers the merit of this work to the soul of the deceased saint. Any private petition the visitor offers up on his own account, imploring a favourable answer for the sake of the saint, or through his intercession; holding his hands before his face like an open book, and then drawing them down his face. Many a visitor, on entering the tomb, kisses the threshold, or touches it with his right hand, which he then kisses; and, on passing by it, persons often touch the window, and kiss the hand thus honoured.

The great periodical or annual festivals are observed with additional ceremonies, and by crowds of visitors. These are called *Moolids* (more properly *Mólids*); and are held on the anniversary of the birth of the saint, or in commemoration of that event. Persons are then hired to recite the *Kur-án* in and near the tomb, during the day; and others, chiefly *darweeshes*, employ themselves during the night in performing *zikrs*, which consist in repeating the name of God, or the profession of his

unity, &c., in chorus, accompanying the words by certain motions of the head, hands, or whole body; munshids, at intervals, singing religious odes or love-songs during these performances to the accompaniment of a náy, which is a kind of flute, or the arghool, which is a double reed-pipe. These moolids are scenes of rejoicing and of traffic, which men and boys and girls attend, to eat sweetmeats, and drink coffee and sherbets, or to amuse themselves with swinging, or turning on a whirlingig, or witnessing the feats of conjurors, or the performances of dancers; and to which tradesmen repair to sell or barter their goods. The visitors to the great moolids of the seyyid Aḥmad El-Bedawee, at Ṭanṭa, in the Delta of Egypt, which are great fairs as well as religious festivals, are almost as numerous as the pilgrims at Mekkeh. During a moolid, the inhabitants of the houses in the neighbourhood of the tomb hang lamps before their houses, and spend a great part of the night listening to the story-tellers at the coffee-shops or attending the zikrs.

These latter performances, though so common among the Arabs, are inconsistent with the spirit of the Moḥammadan religion, and especially with respect to music, which was not employed in religious ceremonies until after the second century of the Flight. The Imán Aboo Bekr Et-Tosee, being asked whether it were lawful or not to be present with people who assembled in a certain place, and read a portion of the K̲ur-án; and, after a munshid had recited some poetry, would dance, and become excited, and play upon tambourines and pipes,—answered, that such practices were vain, ignorant, and erroneous, not ordained by the K̲ur-án or the Traditions

of the Prophet, but invented by those Israelites who worshipped the Golden Calf; that the Prophet and his companions used to sit so quietly that a bird might alight upon the head of any one of them and not be disturbed; that it was incumbent on the Sultán and his vicegerents to prevent such persons from entering the mosques and other places for these purposes; and that no one who believed in God and the Last Day should be present with them, or assist them in their vain performances: such, he asserted, was the opinion of the Imáms of the Muslims.\* Some eminent doctors, however, have contended for the lawfulness of these practices.†

Of the various orders of darweeshes, to which so many of the reputed saints belong, it is unnecessary here to say more than that they differ chiefly in unimportant regulations and rites, such as particular forms of prayer and modes of zikr; that some distinguish themselves by peculiar dresses; and that a few pursue a wandering life and subsist on alms.

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#### IV.—ON THE APPAREL, &c. OF MOURNING.

(See page 36.)

The wearing of mourning appears to have been a custom of both sexes among the Arabs in earlier times, for the black clothing which distinguished the 'Abbásee Khaleefehs and their officers was originally assumed in testimony of grief for the death of the Imám Ibraheem Ibn Moḥammad. It has, however, ceased to be worn

\* El-Is-hákee, reign of El-Mulawekkil.

† De Sacy, 'Chrestomathie Arabe,' tome i. pp. 122, 123, 2nde edit.

by men, as indicating a want of resignation to the decrees of Providence, and is only assumed by women on the occasion of the death of a husband or near relation, and not for an elderly person. In the former cases they dye their shirts, head-veils, face-veils, and handkerchiefs, of a blue or almost black colour, with indigo; and sometimes, with the same dye, stain their hands and arms as high as the elbows, and smear the walls of their apartments. They generally abstain from wearing any article of dress of a bright colour, leave their hair unbraided, and deck themselves with few or no ornaments. They also cease to make use of perfumes, kohl, and henna, and often turn upside-down the carpets, mats, cushions, and coverings of the deewáns.

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V.—ON THE OCCUPATIONS OF THE HAREEM.

(See page 44.)

Next to the service of the husband or master, the care of her children, and attending to other indispensable domestic duties, the most important occupation of the wife or concubine-slave is that of spinning or weaving or needle-work. “Sitting for an hour employed with the distaff is better for women,” said the Prophet, “than a year’s worship; and for every piece of cloth woven of the thread spun by them they shall receive the reward of a martyr.”—’A’isheh, the Prophet’s wife, thus declared the merit of spinning. “Tell the women what I say: There is no woman who spins until she hath clothed herself but all the angels in the Seven Heavens pray for forgiveness of her sins; and she will go forth from her



grave on the day of judgment wearing a robe of Paradise, and with a veil upon her head, and before her shall be an angel, and on her right an angel who will hand her a draught of the water of Selsebeel; and another angel will come to her, and carry her upon his wings, and bear her to Paradise. And when she enters Paradise, eighty thousand maidens will meet her, each maiden bringing a different robe; and she will have mansions of emeralds with three hundred doors, at each of which doors will stand an angel with a present from the Lord of the throne.”\*—The arts above mentioned are pursued by the females in the hareems of the middle and higher classes. “Their leisure-hours are mostly spent in working with the needle; particularly in embroidering handkerchiefs, head-veils, &c., upon a frame called ‘mensej,’ with coloured silks and gold. Many women, even in the houses of the wealthy, replenish their private purses by ornamenting handkerchiefs, and other things in this manner, and employing a delláleh (or female broker) to take them to the market, or to other hareems, for sale.”†

Thus it was in ancient Greece. We are told of Andromache, that—

Far in the close recesses of the dome,  
Pensive she ply'd the melancholy loom;  
A growing work employ'd her secret hours,  
Confus'dly gay with intermingled flowers.‡

Such also, until the decline of the Empire, was the habit of the Roman matrons. Of Augustus it is said, that his

\* Nuzhet el-Mutaämmil, &c., section the seventh.

† ‘Modern Egyptians,’ vol. iii. chap. xix.

‡ Pope’s ‘Homer’s Iliad,’ book xxii. lines 566-9.

ordinary apparel was entirely of the manufacture of his wife, sister, daughter, and nieces.\*

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#### VI.—ON PRESENTS.—(See page 51.)

The custom of giving presents on the occasion of paying a visit, or previously, which is of such high antiquity as to be mentioned in the book of Genesis,† has continued to prevail in the East to this day. Presents of provisions of some kind, wax candles, &c., are sent to persons about to celebrate any festivity, by those who are to be his guests: but after paying a mere visit of ceremony, and on some other occasions, only money is commonly given to the servants of the person visited. In either case, the latter is expected to return the compliment on a similar occasion by presents of equal value. To reject a present generally gives great offence; being regarded as an insult to him who has offered it. When a person arrives from a foreign country, he generally brings some articles of the produce or merchandise of that country as presents to his friends. Thus, pilgrims returning from the holy places bring water of Zemzem, dust from the Prophet's tomb, &c., for this purpose.—Horses, and male and female slaves, are seldom given but by kings or great men.

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#### VII.—ON MARRIAGE.—(See page 61, et seq.)

Marriage is regarded by the Muslims in general as a positive duty; and to neglect it, without a sufficient

\* Suet. Aug. 73.

† Chap. xxxii. ver. 13.

excuse, subjects a man to severe reproach. "When a servant [of God]," said the Prophet, "marries, verily he perfects half his religion."\* He once asked a man, "Art thou married?" The man answered, "No." "And art thou," said he, "sound and healthy?" The answer was, "Yes." "Then," said Moḥammad, "thou art one of the brothers of the devils; for the most wicked among you are the unmarried; and the most vile among your dead are the unmarried; moreover the married are those who are acquitted of filthy conversation; and by Him in whose hands is my soul, the devil hath not a weapon more effective against the virtuous, both men and women, than the neglect of marriage."† Some remarks on this subject, and on the advantages of marriage, have been made in a preceding note on infancy and education.

The number of wives whom a Muslim may have at the same time is four. He may marry free women, or take concubine slaves, or have of both these classes. It is the opinion of most persons, I believe, among the more strictly religious, that a man may not have more than four women, whether they be wives alone, or concubine slaves alone, or of both classes together; but the practice of some of the Companions of the Prophet, who cannot be accused of violating his precepts, affords a strong argument to the contrary. 'Alee, it is said, "was the most devout of the Companions; but he had four wives and seventeen concubines besides, and married, after Fátimēh (may God be well pleased with her!), among all that he married and divorced, more than two

\* *Mishkát el-Maṣábeeh*, vol. ii. p. 79.

† *Nuzhet el-Mutaämmil*, &c., section i.

hundred women : and sometimes he included four wives in one contract, and sometimes divorced four at one time, taking other four in their stead.”\* This may perhaps be an exaggerated statement : but it is certain that the custom of keeping an unlimited number of concubines was common among wealthy Muslims in the first century of the Mohammadan era, and has so continued. The famous author of the work above quoted urges the example of Solomon to prove that the possession of numerous concubines is not inconsistent with piety and good moral ; not considering that God in the beginning made one male and but one female.

A Muslim may divorce his wife twice, and each time take her back. This he may do, even against her wish, during a fixed period, which cannot extend beyond three months, unless she be *enceinte*, in which latter case she must wait until the birth of her child before she will be at liberty to contract a new marriage. During this period the husband is obliged to maintain her. If he divorce her a third time, or by a triple sentence, he cannot take her again unless with her own consent, and by a new contract, and after another marriage has been consummated between her and another husband, and this husband also has divorced her.

It is not a common custom, especially among the middle ranks, for an Arab to have more than one wife at the same time ; but there are few of middle age who have not had several different wives at different periods, tempted to change by the facility of divorce. The case of 'Alee has been mentioned above. Mugheyreh Ibn

\* Nuzhet el-Mutaämmil, &c., section i.



Sheabeli married eighty women in the course of his life ;\* and several more remarkable instances of the love of change are recorded by Arab writers : the most extraordinary case of this kind that I have met with was that of Moḥammad Ibn Eṭ-Ṭeiyib, the dyer, of Baghdád, who died in the year of the Flight 423, aged eighty-five years ; of whom it is related, on most respectable authority, that he married more than nine hundred women !† Supposing, therefore, that he married his first wife when he was fifteen years of age, he must have had, on the average, nearly thirteen wives *per annum*. The women, in general, cannot of course marry so many successive husbands, not only because a woman cannot have more than one husband at a time, but also because she cannot divorce her husband. There have been, however, many instances of Arab women who have married a surprising number of men in rapid succession. Among these may be mentioned Umm Khárijeh, who gave occasion to a proverb on this subject. This woman, who was of the tribe of Bejeeleh, in El-Yemen, married upwards of forty husbands ; and her son Kharijeh knew not who was his father. She used to contract a marriage in the quickest possible manner : a man saying to her, “ Kḥiṭ-bun ” (betrothal), she replied, “ Nik-ḥun ” (marriage), and thus became his lawful wife. She had a very numerous progeny ; several tribes originating from her.‡

For the choice of a wife, a man generally relies on his mother, or some other near female relation, or a professional female betrother (who is called “ kháṭibeh”);

\* Nuzhet el-Mutaämmil, &c., section 1.

† Mir-át ez-Zemán, events of the year above mentioned.

‡ Idem, Proverbs of the Arabs ; and Kámoos, *voce* “kharaja.”

for there are many women who perform this office for hire. The law allows him to see the face of the female whom he proposes to marry previously to his making the contract ; but in the present day this liberty is seldom obtained, excepting among the lower orders. Unless in this case, a man is not allowed to see unveiled any woman but his own wife or slave, and those women to whom the law prohibits his uniting himself in marriage ; nay, according to some, he is not allowed to “ see ” his own niece unveiled, though he may not marry her. It should be added, that a slave may lawfully see the face of his own mistress ; but this privilege is seldom granted in the present day to any slave but a eunuch. An infringement of the law above mentioned is held to be extremely sinful in both parties : “ The curse of God,” said the Prophet, “ is on the seer and the seen : ” yet it is very often disregarded in the case of women of the lower orders.

A man is forbidden, by the *Kur-án*\* and the *Sunneh*, to marry his mother or other ascendant ; daughter, or other descendant ; his sister, or half sister ; the sister of his father or mother or other ascendant ; his niece, or any of her descendants ; his foster-mother who has suckled him five times in the course of the first two years, or a woman related to him by milk in any of the degrees which would preclude his marriage with her if she were similarly related to him by consanguinity ; the mother of his wife, even if he has not consummated his marriage with his wife ; the daughter of his wife, if he has consummated his marriage with the latter (but if he has not done so, and this wife is divorced from him, or

\* Chapter iv. vv. 26, 27.

dead, he may marry her daughter); his father's wife, and his son's wife; and to have at the same time two wives who are sisters, or aunt and niece: he is forbidden also to marry his unemancipated slave, or another man's slave if he has already a free wife; and to marry any woman but one of his own faith, or a Christian, or a Jewess. A Mohammadan woman, however, may only marry a woman of her own faith. An unlawful intercourse with any woman prevents a man from marrying any of her relations who would be forbidden to him if she were his wife.

The reader has already seen that a cousin (the daughter of a paternal uncle) is often chosen as a wife, on account of the tie of blood, which is likely to attach her more strongly to her husband, or on account of an affection conceived in early years. Parity of rank is generally much regarded; and a man is often unable to obtain as his wife the daughter of one of a different profession or trade; or a younger daughter when an elder remains unmarried. A girl is often married at the age of twelve years, and sometimes at ten, or even nine: the usual period is between twelve and sixteen years. At the age of thirteen or fourteen she may be a mother. The young men marry a few years later

The most important requisite in a wife is religion. The Prophet said, "A virtuous wife is better than the world and all that it contains." "A virtuous wife," said Luḡmán, "is like a crown on the head of a king; and a wicked wife is like a heavy burden on the back of an old man." Among the other chief requisites are agreeableness of temper, and beauty of form (undiminished by any defect or irregularity of features or mem-

bers), moderation in the amount of dowry required, and good birth. It is said, "If thou marry not a virgin [which is most desirable], marry a divorced woman, and not a widow; for the divorced woman will respect thy words when thou sayest, 'If there were any good in thee thou hadst not been divorced;' whereas the widow will say, 'May God have mercy on such a one! he hath left me to one unsuited to me.'" But according to another selfish maxim, the woman most to be avoided is she who is divorced from a man by whom she has had a child; for her heart is with him, and she is an enemy to the man who marries her after.\*—Modesty is a requisite upon which too much stress cannot be laid; but this, to an English reader, requires some explanation. 'Alee asked his wife Fátiméh, "Who is the best of women?" She answered, "She who sees not men, and whom they see not."† Modesty, therefore, in the opinion of the Muslims, is most eminently shown by a woman's concealing her person and restraining her eyes from men. "The best rank of men [in a mosque]," said the Prophet, "is the front; and the best rank of women is the rear;"‡ that is, those most distant from the men: but better than even these are the women who pray at home.§—Fruitfulness is also a desirable qualification to be considered in the choice of a wife: "it may be known in maidens," saith the Prophet, "from their relations; because, generally speaking, kindred are similar in disposition, &c."|| Lastly, contentment is to be enumerated among the requisites. It is said, on the same authority, "Verily the

\* Nuzhet el-Mutaämmil, &c., section 4.

† Mishkát el-Masábeeh, vol. i. p. 229.

|| Idem, vol. ii. p. 78.

‡ Idem, section 6.

§ Idem, vol. i. p. 223.



best of women are those that are most content with little.”\* To obtain a contented and submissive wife, many men make their selection from among the classes inferior to them in rank. Others, with a similar view, prefer a concubine slave in the place of a wife.

The consent of a girl not arrived at the age of puberty is not required : her father, or, if he is dead, her nearest adult male relation, or a guardian appointed by will or by the Kádee, acts as her wekeel, or deputy, to effect the marriage-contract for her. If of age, she appoints her own deputy. A dowry is required to legalize the marriage ; and the least dowry allowed by the law is ten dirhems, or drams of silver, about five shillings of our money. Moḥammad married certain of his wives for a dowry of ten dirhems and the household necessities, which were a hand-mill to grind the corn, a water-jar, and a pillow of skin or leather stuffed with the fibres of the palm-tree, which are called “leef:” but some he married for a dowry of five hundred dirhems.† With the increase of wealth and luxury, dowries have increased in amount ; but to our ideas they are still trifling, a sum equivalent to about twenty pounds sterling being a common dowry among Arabs of the middle classes for a virgin, and half or a third or quarter of that sum for a divorced woman or a widow. Two-thirds of the sum is usually paid before making the contract, and the remaining portion held in reserve, to be paid to the woman in case of her divorce or in case of the husband’s death. The father or guardian of a girl under age receives the former portion of her dowry ; but it is con-

\* Mishkát el-Maṣábeeh, vol. ii. p. 79.

† Nuzhet el-Muta’immil, &c., section 4.

sidered as her property, and he generally expends it, with an additional sum from his own purse, in the purchase of necessary furniture, dress, &c., for her, which the husband can never take from her against her own wish.

The marriage-contract is generally, in the present day, merely verbal ; but sometimes a certificate is written and sealed by the Kádee. The most approved or propitious period for this act is the month of Showwál ; the most unpropitious, Moḥarram. The only persons whose presence is required to perform it are the bridegroom (or his deputy), the bride's deputy (who is the betrother), two male witnesses, if such can be easily procured, and the Kádee, or a schoolmaster or some other person, to recite a khuṭbeh, which consists of a few words in praise of God, a form of blessing on the Prophet, and some passages of the Kur-án respecting marriage. They all recite the Fát'hah (or opening chapter of the Kur-án), after which the bridegroom pays the money. The latter and the bride's deputy then seat themselves on the ground, face to face, and grasp each other's right hand, raising the thumbs, and pressing them against each other. Previously to the khuṭbeh, the person who recites this formula places a handkerchief over the two joined hands ; and after the khuṭbeh he dictates to the two contracting parties what they are to say. The betrother generally uses the following or a similar form of words :—" I betroth to thee my daughter [or her for whom I act as deputy] such a one [naming the bride], the virgin [or the adult virgin, &c.], for a dowry of such an amount." The bridegroom answers, " I accept from thee her betrothal to myself." This is

all that is absolutely necessary ; but the address and reply are usually repeated a second and third time, and are often expressed in fuller forms of words. The contract is concluded with the recital of the Fát'hah by all persons present.

This betrothal, or marriage-contract, is often performed several years before the consummation, when the two parties are yet children, or during the infancy of the girl ; but generally not more than about eight or ten days before that event. The household furniture and dress prepared for the bride are sent by her family to the bridegroom's house, usually conveyed by a train of camels, two or three or more days before she is conducted thither.

The feasts and processions which are now to be mentioned are only observed in the case of a virgin-bride ; a widow or divorced woman being remarried in a private manner. I describe them chiefly in accordance with the usages of Cairo, which appear to me most agreeable, in general, with the descriptions and allusions in the present work.—The period most commonly approved for the consummation of marriage is the eve of Friday, or that of Monday. Previously to this event the bridegroom once or twice or more frequently gives a feast to his friends, and for several nights his house and the houses of his near neighbours are usually illuminated by numerous clusters of lamps, or by lanterns, suspended in front of them ; some, to cords drawn across the street. To these or other cords are also suspended small flags, or square pieces of silk, each of two different colours, generally red and green. Some say that the feast or feasts should be given on the occasion of the contract ;

others, on the consummation; others, again, on both these occasions.\* The usual custom of the people of Cairo is to give a feast on the night immediately preceding that of the consummation, and another on the latter night; but some commence their feasts earlier. Respecting marriage-feasts, the Prophet said, "The first day's feast is an incumbent duty; and the second day's, a *sunneh* ordinance; and the third day's, for ostentation and notoriety:" and he forbade eating at the feast of the ostentatious.† It is a positive duty to accept an invitation to a marriage-feast or other lawful entertainment; but the guest is not obliged to eat.‡ The persons invited, and all intimate friends, generally send presents of provisions of some kind a day or two before. The Prophet taught that marriage-feasts should be frugal: the best that *he* gave was with one goat.§ He approved of demonstrations of joy at the celebration of a marriage with songs, and, according to one tradition, by the beating of deffs (or tambourines); but in another tradition the latter practice is condemned.|| The preferable mode of entertaining the guests is by the performance of a *zikh*.

The bride is conducted to the bridegroom's house in the afternoon immediately preceding the night of consummation. On the day next preceding that on which she is conducted thither she goes to the public bath, accompanied by a number of her female relations and friends. The procession generally pursues a circuitous

\* Nuzhet el-Mutaāmmil, &c., section 8.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid.; and Mishkāt el-Maṣābeeh, vol. ii. p. 105.

§ Mishkāt el-Maṣābeeh, vol. ii. p. 104.

|| Nuzhet el-Mutaāmmil, &c., *loco laudato*; and Mishkāt el-Maṣābeeh, vol. ii. p. 89.



route, for the sake of greater display, and, on leaving the house, turns to the right. In Cairo the bride walks under a canopy of silk borne by four men, with one of her near female relations on each side of her. Young unmarried girls walk before her; these are preceded by the married ladies; and the procession is headed and closed by a few musicians with drums and hautboys. The bride wears a kind of pasteboard crown, or cap, and is completely veiled from the view of spectators by a Kashmeer shawl placed over her crown and whole person; but some handsome ornaments of the head are attached externally. The other women are drest in the best of their walking-attire. In the case, however, of a bride of high rank or of wealth, the ladies ride upon high-saddled asses, without music or canopy; and the bride is only distinguished by a Kashmeer shawl instead of the usual black silk covering, one or more eunuchs sometimes riding at the head. In the bath, after the ordinary operations of washing, &c., a feast is made, and the party are often entertained by female singers. Having returned in the same manner to her home, the bride's friends there partake of a similar entertainment with her. Her hands and feet are then stained with henna, and her eyes ornamented with kohl; and her friends give her small presents of money, and take their leave. "It is a sunneh ordinance that the bride wash her feet in a clean vessel, and sprinkle the water in the corners of the chamber, that a blessing may result from this. She should also brighten her face, and put on the best of her apparel, and adorn her eyes with kohl, and stain [her hands and feet] with henna [as above mentioned]; and she should abstain, during the first week,

from eating anything that contains mustard, and from vinegar and sour apples.”\*

The bride is conducted to the house of the bridegroom (on the following day) in the same manner as to the bath, or with more pomp. In Cairo, the bridal processions of persons of very high rank are conducted with singular display. The train is usually headed by buffoons and musicians, and a water-carrier loaded with a goat's-skin filled with sand and water, of very great weight, which is often borne for many hours before, as well as during the procession, merely to amuse the spectators by this feat of strength. Then follow (interrupted by groups of male or female dancers, jugglers, &c.) numerous decorated open waggon, or cars, each of which contains several members of some particular trade or art engaged in their ordinary occupations, or one such person with attendants: in one, for instance, a *kahwejee*, with his assistants and pots and cups and fire, making coffee for the spectators; in a second, makers of sweetmeats; in a third, makers of pancakes (*fateerehs*); in a fourth, silk-lace manufacturers; in a fifth, a silk-weaver, with his loom; in a sixth, tanners of copper vessels, at their work; in a seventh, white-washers, whitening over and over again a wall; in short, almost every manufacture, &c., has its representatives in a different waggon. El-Jabartee describes a procession of this kind in which there were upwards of seventy parties of different trades and arts, each party in a separate waggon, besides buffoons, wrestlers, dancers, and others; followed by various officers, the eunuchs of the bride's family, ladies of the *hareem* with their attendants, then the bride, in a

\* *Nuzhet el-Mutaammil*, &c., *loco laudato*.

European carriage, a troop of memlooks clad in armour, and a Turkish band of music. It was a procession of which the like had not before been seen.\*

The bride and her party, having arrived at the house, sit down to a repast. The bridegroom does not yet see her. He has already been to the bath, and at nightfall he goes in procession with a number of his friends to a mosque to perform the night-prayers: he is accompanied by musicians and singers, or by chanters of lyric odes in praise of the Prophet, and by men bearing poles with cylindrical frames of iron at the top filled with flaming wood; and on his return, most of his other attendants bear lighted wax candles and bunches of flowers.

Returned to his house, he leaves his friends in a lower apartment, and goes up to the bride, whom he finds seated, with a shawl thrown over her head, so as to conceal her face completely, and attended by one or two females. The latter he induces to retire by means of a small present. He then gives a present of money to the bride, as "the price of uncovering the face," and having removed the covering (saying, as he does so, "In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful"), he beholds her, generally, for the first time. On the occasion of this first visit, which is called the "dukhood," or "dukhleh," he is recommended "to perfume himself, and to sprinkle some sugar and almonds on the head of the bride and on that of each woman with her, this practice being established by existing usage and by traditions; also, when he approaches her, he should perform the prayers of two rek'ahs; and she should do the

\* Account of the Emeer Moḥammad A'gha El-Bároodee, obituary, year 1205.

same if able: then he should take hold of the hair over her forehead, and say, 'O God, bless me in my wife, and bless my wife in me! O God, bestow upon me [offspring] by her, and bestow upon her [offspring] by me! O God, unite us, as Thou hast united, happily; and separate us, when Thou separatest, happily!'"\*

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#### VIII.—ON THE MAGNIFICENCE OF ARAB PALACES.

(See page 79.)

The comparison afforded by the following description of the palace of Khaleefeh El-Muktedir, with that of the present sovereign of Egypt, will not be uninteresting. The magnificence of the palaces of Baghdád in the times of the Khaleefehs almost exceeds belief.

In the beginning of the year of the Flight 305 (June, A.D. 917), two ambassadors from the Greek Emperor (Constantine IX., Porphyrogenetus) arrived in Baghdád on a mission to the Khaleefeh El-Muktedir, bringing an abundance of costly presents. They were first received by the Wezeer, who, at the audience which he granted to them in his garden-palace, displayed on this occasion a degree of magnificence that had never before been manifested by any of his rank; pages, memlooks, and soldiers, crowded the avenues and courts of his mansion, the apartments of which were hung with tapestry of the value of thirty thousand deenárs; and the Wezeer himself was surrounded by generals and other officers on his right and left and behind his seat, when the two ambas-

\* Nuzhet el-Mutaämmil, &c., section 8.



sadors approached him, dazzled by the splendour that surrounded them, to beg for an interview with the Khaleefeh. El-Muktedir, having appointed a day on which he would receive them, ordered that the courts and passages and avenues of his palace should be filled with armed men, and that all the apartments should be furnished with the utmost magnificence. A hundred and sixty thousand armed soldiers were arranged in ranks in the approach to the palace ; next to these were the pages of the closets, and chief eunuchs, clad in silk and with belts set with jewels, in number seven thousand ; four thousand white, and three thousand black : there were also seven hundred chamberlains ; and beautifully ornamented boats of various kinds were seen floating upon the Tigris, hard by. The two ambassadors passed first by the palace of the chief chamberlain, and, astonished at the splendid ornaments and pages and arms which they there beheld, imagined that this was the palace of the Khaleefeh ; but what they had seen here was eclipsed by what they beheld in the latter, where they were amazed by the sight of thirty-eight thousand pieces of tapestry of gold-embroidered silk brocade, and twenty-two thousand magnificent carpets. Here also were two menageries of beasts by nature wild, but tamed by art, and eating from the hands of men : among them were a hundred lions ; each lion with its keeper. They then entered the Palace of the Tree, enclosing a pond, from which rose the Tree : this had eighteen branches, with leaves of various colours (being artificial), and with birds of gold and silver (or gilt and silvered) of every variety of kind and size, perched upon its branches, so constructed that each of them sang. Thence they passed

into the garden, in which were furniture and utensils not to be enumerated : in the passages leading to it were suspended ten thousand gilt coats of mail. Being at length conducted before El-Muktedir, they found him seated on a sofa of ebony inlaid with gold and silver, to the right of which were hung nine necklaces of jewels, and the like to the left, the jewels of which outshine the light of day. The two ambassadors paused at the distance of about a hundred cubits from the Khaleefeh, with the interpreter. Having left the presence, they were conducted through the palace, and were shown splendidly caparisoned elephants, a giraffe, lynxes, and other beasts. They were then clad with robes of honour, and to each of them was brought fifty thousand dirhems, together with dresses and other presents. It is added, that the ambassadors approached the palace through a street called “ the Street of the Menárehs,” in which were a thousand menárehs, or menarets. It was at the hour of noon ; and as they passed, the muëddins from all these menárehs chanted the call to prayer at the same time, so that the earth almost quaked at the sound, and the ambassadors were struck with fear.\*

The Orientals well understand how to give the most striking effect to the jewels which they display on their dress, &c., on occasions of state. Sir John Malcolm, describing his reception by the late King of Persia, says, “ His dress baffled all description. The ground of his robes was white ; but he was so covered with jewels of an extraordinary size, and their splendour, from his being seated where the rays of the sun played upon them, was so dazzling, that it was impossible to distinguish the mi-

\* Mir-át ez-Zemán, events of the year above mentioned

nute parts which combined to give such amazing brilliancy to his whole figure.” \*

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IX.—ON MEALS, AND THE MANNER OF EATING.

(See page 92.)

The Muslim takes a light breakfast after the morning-prayers, and dinner after the noon-prayers ; or a single meal instead of these two, before noon. His principal meal is supper, which is taken after the prayers of sunset. A man of rank or wealth, when he has no guest, generally eats alone ; his children eat after him, or with his wife or wives. In all his repasts he is moderate with regard to the quantity which he eats, however numerous the dishes.

In former times, it appears that the dishes were sometimes, I believe generally, placed upon a round embroidered cloth spread on the floor, and sometimes on a tray, which was either laid on the floor or upon a small stand or stool. The last is the mode now always followed in the houses of the higher and middle classes of the Arabs. The table is usually placed upon a round cloth, spread in the middle of the floor, or in a corner, next two of the *deewáns*, or low seats which generally extend along three sides of the room. It is composed of a large round tray of silver, or of tinned copper, or of brass, supported by a stool, commonly about fifteen or sixteen inches high, made of wood, and generally inlaid with mother-of-pearl, tortoise-shell, &c. When there are numerous guests, two or more such tables are prepared. The dishes are of

\* ‘Sketches of Persia, vol. ii. p. 129.

silver, or of tinned copper, or of china. Several of these are placed upon the tray ; and around them are disposed some round, flat cakes of bread, with spoons of box-wood, ebony, or other material, and, usually, two or three limes, cut in halves, to be squeezed over certain of the dishes. When these preparations have been made, each person who is to partake of the repast receives a napkin ; and a servant pours water over his hands. A basin and ewer of either of the metals first mentioned are employed for this purpose ; the former has a cover with a receptacle for a piece of soap in its centre, and with numerous perforations through which the water runs during the act of washing, so that it is not seen when the basin is brought from one person to another. It is indispensably requisite to wash at least the right hand before eating, with the fingers, anything but dry food ; and the mouth, also, is often rinsed, the water being taken up into it from the right hand. The company sit upon the floor, or upon cushions, or some of them on the *deewán*, either cross-legged, or with the right knee raised : they retain the napkins before mentioned ; or a long napkin, sufficient to surround the tray, is placed upon their knees ; and each person, before he begins to eat, says, “ In the name of God,” or, “ In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.” The master of the house begins first : if he did not so, some persons would suspect that the food was poisoned. The thumb and two fingers of the right hand serve instead of knives and forks ; and it is the usual custom for a person to help himself to a portion of the contents of a dish by drawing it towards the edge, or taking it from the edge, with a morsel of bread, which he



eats with it : when he takes too large a portion for a single mouthful, he generally places it on his cake of bread. He takes from any dish that pleases him ; and sometimes a host hands a delicate morsel with his fingers to one of his guests. It is not allowable to touch food with the left hand (as it is used for unclean purposes), excepting in a few cases, when both hands are required to divide a joint.

Among the more common dishes are the following :— lamb or mutton cut into small pieces, and stewed with various vegetables, and sometimes with peaches, apricots, or jujubes, and sugar ; cucumbers or small gourds, or the fruit of the black or white egg-plant, stuffed with rice and minced meat, &c. ; vine-leaves or pieces of lettuce-leaf or cabbage-leaf, enclosing a similar composition ; small morsels of lamb or mutton, roasted on skewers, and called “ kebáb ;” fowls simply roasted or boiled, or boned, and stuffed with raisins, pistachio-nuts, crumbled bread, and parsley ; and various kinds of pastry, and other sweets. The repast is frequently commenced with soup ; and is generally ended with boiled rice, mixed with a little butter, and seasoned with salt and pepper ; or after this, is served a water-melon or other fruit, or a bowl of a sweet drink composed of water with raisins, and sometimes other kinds of fruit, boiled in it, and then sugar, and with a little rose-water added to it when cool. The meat, having generally little fat, is cooked with clarified butter, and is so thoroughly done that it is easily divided with the fingers.

A whole lamb, stuffed in the same manner as the fowls above mentioned, is not a very uncommon dish ; but one

more extraordinary, of which 'Abd El-Lateef gives an account \* as one of the most remarkable that he had seen in Egypt, I am tempted to describe. It was an enormous pie, composed in the following manner:—Thirty pounds of fine flour being kneaded with five pounds and a half of oil of sesame, and divided into two equal portions, one of these was spread upon a round tray of copper, about four spans in diameter. Upon this were placed three lambs, stuffed with pounded meat fried with oil of sesame and ground pistachio-nuts, and various hot aromatics, such as pepper, ginger, cinnamon, mastic, coriander-seed, cumin-seed, cardamom, nut [or nutmeg?], &c. These were then sprinkled with rose-water infused with musk; and upon the lambs, and in the remaining spaces, were placed twenty fowls, twenty chickens, and fifty smaller birds; some of which were baked, and stuffed with eggs; some, stuffed with meat; and some, fried with the juice of sour grapes, or that of limes, or some similar acid. To the above were added a number of small pies; some filled with meat, and others with sugar and sweetmeats; and sometimes, the meat of another lamb, cut into small pieces, and some fried cheese. The whole being piled up in the form of a dome, some rose-water infused with musk and aloes-wood was sprinkled upon it; and the other half of the paste first mentioned was spread over, so as to close the whole: it was then baked, wiped with a sponge, and again sprinkled with rose-water infused with musk.

With respect to clean and unclean meats, the Muslim is subject to nearly the same laws as the Jew. Swine's flesh, and blood, are especially forbidden to him; but

\* Pp. 180—182, edit. Oxon. 1800.

camel's flesh is allowed. The latter, however, being of a coarse nature, is never eaten when any other meat can be obtained, excepting by persons of the lower classes, and by Arabs of the desert. Of fish, almost every kind is eaten (excepting shell-fish), usually fried in oil : of game, little ; partly in consequence of frequent doubt whether it have been lawfully killed. The diet consists, in a great measure, of vegetables, and includes a large variety of pastry. A very common kind of pastry is a pancake, which is made very thin, and folded over several times like a napkin ; it is saturated with butter, and generally sweetened with honey or sugar ; as is also another common kind, which somewhat resembles vermicelli.

The usual beverage at meals is water, which is drunk from cooling, porous, earthen bottles, or from cups of brass or other metal : but in the houses of the wealthy, sherbet is sometimes served instead of this, in covered glass cups, each of which contains about three-quarters of a pint. The sherbet is composed of water made very sweet with sugar, or with a hard conserve of violets or roses or mulberries, &c. After every time that a person drinks, he says, " Praise be to God ; " and each person of the company says to him, " May it benefit : " to which he replies, " May God benefit thee." The Arabs drink little or no water during a meal, but generally take a large draught immediately after. The repast is quickly finished ; and each person, as soon as he has done, says, " Praise be to God," or " Praise be to God, the Lord of all creatures." He then washes, in the same manner as before, but more thoroughly ; well lathering his beard, and rinsing his mouth.

## FESTIVITIES.—(See page 113.)

The prohibition of wine, or rather, of fermented and intoxicating liquors, being one of the most remarkable and important points of the Mohammadan religion, it might be imagined that the frequent stories in the *Thousand and One Nights*, describing parties of Muslims as habitually indulging in the use of forbidden beverages, are scandalous misrepresentations of Arab manners and customs. There are, however, many similar anecdotes interspersed in the works of Arab historians, which (though many of them are probably untrue in their application to particular individuals) could not have been offered to the public by such writers if they were not of a nature consistent with the customs of a considerable class of the Arab nation.

In investigating this subject, it is necessary, in the first place, to state, that there is a kind of wine which Muslims are permitted to drink. It is properly called “nebeedh” (a name which is *now* given to *prohibited* kinds of wine), and is generally prepared by putting dry grapes, or dry dates, in water, to extract their sweetness, and suffering the liquor to ferment slightly, until it acquires a little sharpness or pungency. The Prophet himself was in the habit of drinking wine of this kind, which was prepared for him in the first part of the night; he drank it on the first and second days following; but if any remained on the morning of the third day, he either gave it to his servants or ordered it to be poured out upon the ground.\* Such beverages have, therefore, been drunk by the strictest of his followers; and Ibn Khaldoon strongly argues that nebeedh thus prepared from dates was the kind of wine used by the Khalefehs Hároon Er-

\* *Mishkát el-Maṣábeeh*, vol. ii. p. 339.



Rasheed and El-Ma-moon, and several other eminent men, who have been commonly accused of habitually and publicly indulging in debauches of wine properly so called; that is, of inebriating liquors.\*

Nebeedh, prepared from raisins, is commonly sold in Arab towns, under the name of "zebeeb," which signifies "raisins." This I have often drunk in Cairo; but never could perceive that it was in the slightest degree fermented. Other beverages, to which the name of "nebeedh" has been applied (though, like zebeeb, no longer called by that name), are also sold in Arab towns. The most common of these is an infusion of licorice, and called by the name of the root, "'erk-soos." The nebeedh of dates is sold in Cairo with the dates themselves in the liquor; and in like manner is that of figs. Under the same appellation of "nebeedh" have been classed the different kinds of beer now commonly called "boozeh," which have been mentioned in former pages. Opium, hemp, &c., are now more frequently used by the Muslims to induce intoxication or exhilaration. The young leaves of the hemp are generally used alone, or mixed with tobacco, for smoking; and the capsules, without the seeds, enter into the composition of several intoxicating conserves. Some remarks upon this subject have been inserted in a former note.

By my own experience I am but little qualified to pronounce an opinion respecting the prevalence of drinking wine among the Arabs; for, never drinking it myself, I had little opportunity of observing others do so during my residence among Muslims. I judge, therefore, from the conversations and writings of Arabs, which justify me in

\* De Sacy, *Chrestomathie Arabe*, vol. i. pp. 125—131, Arabic text, 2nd ed

asserting that the practice of drinking wine in private, and by select parties, is far from being uncommon among modern Muslims, though certainly more so than it was before the introduction of tobacco into the East, in the beginning of the seventeenth century of our era ; for this herb, being in a slight degree exhilarating, and at the same time soothing, and unattended by the injurious effects that result from wine, is a sufficient luxury to many who, without it, would have recourse to intoxicating beverages merely to pass away hours of idleness. The use of coffee, too, which became common in Egypt, Syria, and other countries besides Arabia, a century earlier than tobacco, doubtless tended to render the habit of drinking wine less general. That it was adopted as a substitute for wine appears even from its name, “*kahweh*,” an old Arabic term for wine ; whence the Turkish “*kahveh*,” the Italian “*caffè*,” and our “*coffee*.”

There is an Arabic work of some celebrity, and not of small extent, entitled “*Halbet el-Kumeyt*,”\* apparently written shortly before the Arabs were in possession of the first of the above-mentioned substitutes for wine, nearly the whole of which consists of anecdotes and verses relating to the pleasures resulting from, or attendant upon, the use of wine ; a few pages at the end being devoted to the condemnation of this practice, or, in other words, to prove the worthlessness of all that precedes. Of this work I possess a copy, a quarto volume of 464 pages. I have endeavoured to skim its cream ; but found it impossible to do so without collecting, at the

\* That is, a race-course for sallies of wit and eloquence on the subject of wine : the word “*kumeyt*” being used, in preference to more than a hundred others that might have been employed, as signifying “*wine*,” because it bears also the meaning of “*a deep bay horse*.”

same time, a considerable quantity of most filthy scum ; for it is characterised by wit and humour plentifully interlarded with the grossest and most revolting obscenity ; yet it serves to confirm what has been above asserted. The mere existence of such a work (and it is not the only one of the kind), written by a man of learning, and I believe a Kādee, a judge, or one holding the honourable office of a guardian of religion and morality,\*—written, too, evidently with pleasure, notwithstanding his assertion to the contrary, — is a strong argument in favour of the prevalence of the practice which it paints in the most fascinating colours, and then condemns. Its author terminates a chapter (the ninth), in which many well-known persons are mentioned as having been addicted to wine, by saying, that the Khaleefehs, Emeers, and Wezeers, so addicted, are too numerous to name in such a work ; and by relating a story of a man who placed his own wife in pledge in the hands of a wine-merchant, after having expended in the purchase of the forbidden liquor all the property that he possessed. He excuses himself (in his preface) for writing this book, by saying that he had been ordered to do so by one whom he could not disobey ; thus giving us a pretty strong proof that a great man in his time was not ashamed of avowing his fondness for the prohibited enjoyment. If, then, we admit the respectable authority of Ibn Khaldoon, and acquit of the vice of drunkenness those illustrious individuals whose characters he vindicates, we must still regard most of the anecdotes relating to the carousals of other persons as being not without foundation.

\* His name is not mentioned in my copy ; but D'Herbelot states it to have been Shems ed-Deen Mohammad, Ibn Bedr ed-Deen Hasan, el-Kādee ; and writes his surname "Naouagi," or "Naouahi."

One of my friends, who enjoys a high reputation, ranking among the most distinguished of the 'Ulama of Cairo, is well known to his intimate acquaintances as frequently indulging in the use of forbidden beverages with a few select associates. I disturbed him and his companions by an evening visit on one of these occasions, and was kept waiting within the street-door while the guests quickly removed everything that would give me any indication of the manner in which they had been employed ; for the announcement of my (assumed) name, and their knowledge of my abstemious character, completely disconcerted them. I found them, however, in the best humour. They had contrived, it appeared, to fill with wine a *china* bottle, of the kind used at that season (winter) for water ; and when any one of them asked the servant for water, this bottle was brought to him ; but when I made the same demand, my host told me that there was a bottle of water on the sill of the window behind that part of the *deewán* upon which I was seated. The evening passed away very pleasantly, and I should not have known how unwelcome was my intrusion had not one of the guests with whom I was intimately acquainted, in walking part of the way home with me, explained to me the whole occurrence. There was with us a third person, who, thinking that my antipathy to wine was feigned, asked me to stop at his house on my way, and take a cup of "white coffee," by which he meant brandy.

Another of my Muslim acquaintances in Cairo I frequently met at the house of a mutual friend, where, though he was in most respects very bigoted, he was in the habit of indulging in wine. For some time he re-



frained from this gratification when I was present ; but at length my presence became so irksome to him, that he ventured to enter into an argument with me on the subject of the prohibition. The only answer I could give to his question, “ Why is wine forbidden ? ”—was in the words of the *Kur-án*, “ Because it is the source of more evil than profit.”\* This suited his purpose, as I intended it should ; and he asked, “ What evil results from it ? ” I answered, “ Intoxication and quarrels, &c.”—“ Then,” said he, “ if a man take not enough to intoxicate him there is no harm ; ”—and, finding that I acquiesced by silence, he added, “ I am in the habit of taking a little ; but never enough to intoxicate. Boy, bring me a glass.”—He was the only Muslim, however, whom I have heard to argue against the absolute interdiction of inebriating liquors.

Histories tell us that some of the earlier followers of the Prophet indulged in wine, holding the text above referred to as indecisive ; and that *Mohammad* was at first doubtful upon this subject appears from another text, in which his followers were told not to come to prayer when they were drunk, until they should know what they would say ; † an injunction nearly similar to one in the Bible : ‡ but when frequent and severe contentions resulted from their use of wine, the following more decided condemnation of the practice was pronounced :—“ O ye who have become believers ! verily wine and lots and images and divining-arrows are an abomination of the work of the devil ; therefore, avoid them, that ye may prosper.”§ This law is absolute : its

\* Chap. ii. v. 216.

† Leviticus, ch. x. v. 9.

‡ Chap. iv. v. 46.

§ *Kur-án*, ch. v. v. 92.

violation in the smallest degree is criminal. The punishment ordained by the law for drinking (or, according to most doctors, for even tasting) wine or spirits, or inducing intoxication by any other means, on ordinary occasions, is the infliction of eighty stripes in the case of a free man, and forty in that of a slave: but if the crime be openly committed in the course of any day of the month of Ramaḍán, when others are fasting, the punishment prescribed is death!

The prohibition of wine hindered many of the Prophet's contemporaries from embracing his religion. It is said that the famous poet El-Aasha, who was one of them, delayed to join his cause on this account, until death prevented him. A person passing by his tomb (at Menfooḥah, in El-Yemámeh), and observing that it was moist, asked the reason, and was answered, that the young men of the place, considering them still as their cup-companion, drank wine over his grave, and poured his cup upon it.\* Yet many of the most respectable of the pagan Arabs, like certain of the Jews and early Christians, abstained totally from wine, from a feeling of its injurious effects upon morals, and, in their climate, upon health; or, more especially, from the fear of being led by it into the commission of foolish and degrading actions. Thus, Keys, the son of 'A'ṣim, being one night overcome with wine, attempted to grasp the moon, and swore that he would not quit the spot where he stood until he had laid hold of it: after leaping several times with the view of doing so, he fell flat upon his face; and when he recovered his senses, and was acquainted with the cause of his face being bruised, he

\* Ḥalbet el-Kumeyt, chap. ix.

made a solemn vow to abstain from wine ever after.\* A similar feeling operated upon many Muslims more than religious principle. The Khaleefeh 'Abd El-Melik Ibn Marwán took pleasure in the company of a slave named Naşeeb, and one day desired him to drink with him. The slave replied, "O Prince of the Faithful, I am not related to thee, nor have I any authority over thee, and I am of no rank or lineage: I am a black slave, and my wit and politeness have drawn me into thy favour: how then shall I take that which will plunder me of these two qualities; and by what shall I then propitiate thee?" The Khaleefeh admired and excused him.†

It was the custom of many Muslim princes, as might be inferred from the above anecdote, to admit the meanest of their dependants to participate in their unlawful carousals when they could have no better companions; but poets and musicians were their more common associates on these occasions; and these two classes, and especially the latter, are in the present day the most addicted to intoxicating liquors. Few modern Arab musicians are so well contented with extraordinary payment and mere sweet sherbet as with a moderate fee and plenty of wine and brandy; and many of them deem even wine but a sorry beverage.

It was usual with the host and guests at wine-parties to wear dresses of bright colours, red, yellow, and green;‡ and to perfume their beards and mustaches with civet, or to have rose-water sprinkled upon them; and ambergris or aloes-wood, or some other odoriferous sub-

\* Halbet el-Kumeyt, chap. ix., khátimēh, or conclusion. † Ibid.

‡ Fakhr ed-Deen, in De Sacy's Chrest. Arabe, vol. i. p. 23, Arabic text, 2nd ed.

stance, placed upon burning coals in a censer, diffused a delicious fragrance throughout the saloon of the revels.

The wine, it appears, was rather thick; for it was necessary to strain it:\* it was probably sweet, and not strong; for it was drunk in large quantities. Frequently, perhaps, it was nebeedh of dry raisins kept longer than the law allows. It was usually kept in a large earthen vessel, called "denn," high, and small at the bottom, which was partly imbedded in the earth to keep it upright. The name of this vessel is now given to a cask of wood; but the kind above mentioned was of earth, for it was easily broken.—A famous saint, Abu-l-Hoseyn En-Nooree, seeing a vessel on the Tigris containing thirty denns belonging to the Khaleefeh El-Moatadid, and being told that they contained wine, took a boat-pole, and broke them all, excepting one. When brought before the Khaleefeh to answer for this action, and asked by him, "Who made thee Mohtesib?"† he boldly answered, "He who made thee Khaleefeh!"—and was pardoned.‡—Pitch was used by the Arabs, as it was by the Greeks and Romans, for the purpose of curing their wine; the interior of the denn being coated with it. A smaller kind of earthen jar, or amphora,§ and a bottle of leather,|| or of glass,¶ were also used. The wine was transferred for the table to glass jugs, or long-spouted ewers.\*\* These and the cups were placed upon a round

\* "While tears of blood trickle from the strainer, the ewer beneath it giggles." (Eş-Şadr Ibn El-Wekeel, quoted in the *Ḥalbet el-Kumeyt*, chap. xiii.)—The strainer is called "ráwook."

† The Mohtesib is inspector of the markets, the weights and measures, and provisions, &c.

‡ *Mir-át ez-Zemán*, events of the year 295.

§ In Arabic, "bátiyeh."

|| "Baṭṭah."

¶ "Ḳinneeneh."

\*\* "Ibreeks."



embroidered cloth spread on the floor, or upon a round tray. The latter is now in general use, and is supported on a low stool, described in a former note as being used at ordinary meals. The guests sat around, reclining against pillows; or they sat upon the *deewán*, and a page or slave handed the cup, having on his right arm a rich embroidered napkin: the person after drinking took the end of this to wipe his lips. The cups are often described as holding a fluid pound, or little less than an English pint; and this is to be understood literally, or nearly so: they were commonly of cut glass; but some were of crystal, or silver, or gold.\* With these and the ewers or jugs were placed several saucers, or small dishes,† of fresh and dried fruits;‡ and fans and fly-whisks, of the kinds described on a former occasion, were used by the guests.

The most common and esteemed fruits in the countries inhabited by the Arabs may here be mentioned.

The date§ deserves the first place. The Prophet's favourite fruits were fresh dates|| and water-melons; and he ate them both together.¶ “Honour,” said he, “your paternal aunt, the date-palm; for she was created of the earth of which Adam was formed.”\*\* It is said that God hath given this tree as a peculiar favour to the Muslims; that He hath decreed all the date-palms in the world to them, and they have accordingly conquered

\* The cup, when full, was generally called “*kás*,” when empty, “*ḡadaḡ*,” or “*jám*.” The name of “*kás*” is now given to a small glass used for brandy and liqueurs, and similar to our liqueur-glass: the glass or cup used for wine is called, when so used, “*koobeh*,” it is the same as that used for sherbet; but in the latter case it is called “*kulleh*.”

† “*Nuḡuldáns*.” ‡ “*Nuḡl*.” § “*Belah*.” || “*Ruṭab*.”

¶ Es-Suyoottee, account of the fruits of Egypt, in his history of that country. (MS. in my possession.)

\*\* Ibid.

every country in which these trees are found ; and all are said to have derived their origin from the Hejáz.\* The palm-tree has several well-known properties that render it an emblem of a human being ; among which are these ; that if the head be cut off, the tree dies ; and if a branch be cut off, another does not grow in its place.† Dates are preserved in a moist state by being merely pressed together in a basket or skin, and thus prepared are called “’ajweh.” There are many varieties of this fruit. The pith or heart of the palm‡ is esteemed for its delicate flavour.

The water-melon,§ from what has been said of it above, ought to be ranked next ; and it really merits this distinction. “Whoso eateth,” said the Prophet, “a mouthful of water-melon, God writeth for him a thousand good works, and cancelleth a thousand evil works, and raiseth him a thousand degrees ; for it came from Paradise ;”—and again, “The water-melon is food and drink, acid and alkali, and a support of life,” &c.|| The varieties of this fruit are very numerous.

The banana¶ is a delicious fruit. The Prophet pronounced the banana-tree to be the only thing on earth that resembles a thing in Paradise ; because it bears fruit both in winter and summer.\*\*

The pomegranate†† is another celebrated fruit. Every pomegranate, according to the Prophet, contains a fecundating seed from Paradise.‡‡ The other most common

\* Es-Suyootee, account of the fruits of Egypt, in the history of that country. (MS. in my possession.)

† El-Kazweenee. (MS. in my possession.)

‡ “Jummár.”

§ El-Kazweenee.

¶ Es-Suyootee, ubi supra.

‡‡ Es Suyootee, ubi supra.

§ “Biṭṭeeekh,” vulgo “buṭṭeeekh.”

¶ “Móz.”

†† “Rummán.”

and esteemed fruits are the following—the apple, pear, quince, apricot, peach, fig, sycamore-fig, grape, lote, jujube, plum, walnut, almond, hazel-nut, pistachio-nut, orange, Seville orange, lime and lemon, citron, mulberry, olive, and sugar-cane.\*

Of a selection of these fruits consists the dessert which accompanies the wine; but the table is not complete without a bunch or two of flowers placed in the midst.

Though the Arabs are far from being remarkable for exhibiting taste in the planning of their gardens, they are passionately fond of flowers, and especially of the rose.† The Khaleefeh El-Mutawekkil monopolized roses for his own enjoyment; saying, “I am the King of Sultáns, and the rose is the king of sweet-scented flowers; therefore each of us is most worthy of the other for a companion.” The rose, in his time, was seen nowhere but in his palace: during the season of this flower he wore rose-coloured clothes; and his carpets, &c., were sprinkled with rose-water.‡ A similar passion for the rose is said to have distinguished a weaver, in the reign of El-Ma-moon. He was constantly employed at his loom every day in the year, even during the congregational prayers of Friday, excepting in the rose-season, when he abandoned his work, and gave himself up to the enjoyment of wine, early in the morning and late in the evening, loudly proclaiming his revels by singing—

\* The Arabic names of these fruits are, tuffáḥ (vulgo, tiffáḥ), kum-metrē, safargal, mishmish, khókh, teen, jummeyz (vulgo, jemmeyz), 'eneb, nabḵ or sidr, 'onnáb (vulgo, 'annáb), ijjás or barkook, józ, lóz, bunduk, fustuk, burtukán, nárinj, leymoon, utrujj or turunj and kebbád, toot, zeytoon, and ḵaşab es-sukkar. † “Ward.”

‡ Halbet el-Kumeyt, chap. xvii.; and Es-Suyootē, account of the flowers of Egypt, in his history of that country.

“The season has become pleasant ! The time of the rose is come  
Take your morning potations, as long as the rose has blossoms  
and flowers ! ”

When he resumed his work, he made it known by singing aloud—

“If my lord prolong my life until the rose-season, I will take  
again my morning potations ; but if I die before it, alas ! for  
the loss of the rose and wine !

“I implore the God of the supreme throne, whose glory be extolled,  
that my heart may continually enjoy the evening potations to  
the day of resurrection.”

—The Khaleefeh was so amused with the humour of this man, that he granted him an annual pension of ten thousand dirhems to enable him to enjoy himself amply on these occasions.\*—Another anecdote may be added to show the estimation of the rose in the mind of an Arab. It is said that Rowḥ Ibn Ḥátim, the governor of the province of Northern Africa, was sitting one day, with a female slave, in an apartment of his palace, when a eunuch brought him a jar full of red and white roses, which a man had offered as a present. He ordered the eunuch to fill the jar with silver in return ; but his concubine said, “O my lord, thou hast not acted equitably towards the man ; for his present to thee is of two colours, red and white.” The Emeer replied, “Thou hast said truly ;” and gave orders to fill the jar for him with silver and gold (dirhems and deenárs) intermixed.†  
—Some persons preserve roses during the whole of the year, in the following manner :—They take a number of rose-buds, and fill with them a new earthen jar, and,

\* Halbet el-Kumeyt, chap. xvii.

† Halbet el-Kumeyt, *ibid.*



after closing its mouth with mud, so as to render it impervious to the air, bury it in the earth. Whenever they want a few roses, they take out some of these buds, which they find unaltered, sprinkle a little water upon them, and leave them for a short time in the air, when they open, and appear as if just gathered.\* The rose is even a subject of miracles. It is related by Ibn Kuteybeh, that there grows in India a kind of rose upon the leaves of which is inscribed, "There is no deity but God."† But I find a more particular account of this miraculous rose. A person, who professed to have seen it, said, "I went into India, and I saw, at one of its towns, a large rose, sweet-scented, upon which was inscribed, in white characters, 'There is no deity but God; Moḥammad is God's apostle: Aboo Bekr is the very veracious: 'Omar is the discriminator;' and I doubted of this, whether it had been done by art; so I took one of the blossoms not yet opened, and in it was the same inscription; and there were many of the same kind there. The people of that place worshipped stones, and knew not God, to whom be ascribed might and glory."‡—Roses are announced for sale in the streets of Cairo by the cry of "The rose was a thorn: from the sweat of the Prophet it blossomed!" in allusion to a miracle recorded of Moḥammad. "When I was taken up into heaven," said the Prophet, "some of my sweat fell upon the earth, and from it sprang the rose; and whoever would smell my scent let him smell the rose." In another tradition it is said, "The white rose was created from my sweat on the night of the Mearáj;§

\* Halbet el-Kumeyt, chap. xvii.

† Ibid.

‡ És-Suyoottee, ubi supra.

§ The night of the Ascension.

and the red rose, from the sweat of Jabraeel ;\* and the yellow rose, from the sweat of El-Burák.”† The Persians take especial delight in roses ; sometimes spreading them as carpets or beds on which to sit or recline in their revellings.

But there is a flower pronounced more excellent than the rose ; that of the Egyptian privet, or *Lawsonia inermis*.‡ Moḥammad said, “ The chief of the sweet-scented flowers of this world and of the next is the fághiyeh ;” and this was his favourite flower.§ I approve of his taste ; for this flower, which grows in clusters somewhat like those of the lilac, has a most delicious fragrance. But, on account of discrepancies in different traditions, a Muslim may, with a clear conscience, prefer either of the two flowers next mentioned.

The Prophet said of the violet,|| “ The excellence of the extract of violets, above all other extracts, is as the excellence of me above all the rest of the creation : it is cold in summer, and hot in winter :” and in another tradition, “ The excellence of the violet is as the excellence of el-Islám above all other religions.”¶ A delicious sherbet is made of a conserve of sugar and violet-flowers.

The myrtle\*\* is the rival of the violet. “ Adam,” said the Prophet, “ fell down from Paradise with three things ; the myrtle, which is the chief of sweet-scented

\* Gabriel, who accompanied the Prophet.

† The beast on which he rode from Mekkeh to Jerusalem previously to his ascension. These traditions are from Es-Suyooṭee, ubi supra.

‡ This flower is called “ fághiyeh,” and, more commonly, “ temer el-henna ;” or, according to some, the fághiyeh is the flower produced by a slip of temer el-henna planted upside down, and superior to the flower of the latter planted in the natural way.

§ Es-Suyooṭee, ubi supra.

¶ Es Suyooṭee.

|| “ Benefsej.”

\*\* “ A’s,” or “ narseen.”

flowers in this world ; an ear of wheat, which is the chief of all kinds of food in this world ; and pressed dates, which are the chief of the fruits of this world.\*

The anemone † was monopolized for his own enjoyment by Noamán Ibn El-Mundhir (King of El-Heereh, and contemporary of Moḥammad), as the rose was afterwards by El-Mutawekkil.‡

Another flower much admired and celebrated in the East is the gilliflower.§ There are three principal kinds ; the most esteemed is the yellow, or golden-coloured, which has a delicious scent both by night and day ; the next, the purple, and other dark kinds, which have a scent only in the night ; the least esteemed, the white, which has no scent. The yellow gilliflower is an emblem of a neglected lover.||

The narcissus¶ is very highly esteemed. Galen says, " He who has two cakes of bread, let him dispose of one of them for some flowers of the narcissus ; for bread is the food of the body, and the narcissus is the food of the soul." Hippocrates, too, gave a similar opinion.\*\*

The following flowers complete the list of those celebrated as most appropriate to add to the delights of wine :—the jasmine, eglantine, Seville-orange-flower, lily, sweet-basil, wild thyme, bupthalmum, chamomile, nenuphar, lotus, pomegranate-flower, poppy, ketmia,

\* Es-Suyooṭee.

† "Shakáik." The "adhriyoon," or "ádharyoon," is said to be a variety of the anemone.

‡ From the former, or from "noamán," as signifying "blood," the anemone was named "shakáik en-noamán."

§ "Menthoo," or "kheeree." || Ḥalbet el-Kumeyt, chap. xvii.

¶ "Narjis."

\*\* Ḥalbet el-Kumeyt, ubi supra ; Es-Suyooṭee, ubi supra ; and El-Kazweenee.

crocus or saffron, safflower, flax, the blossoms of different kinds of bean, and the almond.\*

A sprig of Oriental willow† adds much to the charms of a bunch of flowers, being the favourite symbol of a graceful female.

But I have not yet mentioned all that contributes to the pleasures of an Eastern carousal. For the juice of the grape is not fully relished without melodious sounds. “Wine is as the body; music, as the soul; and joy is their offspring.”‡ All the five senses should be gratified. For this reason an Arab toper, who had nothing, it appears, but wine to enjoy, exclaimed—

“Ho! give me wine to drink; and tell me, ‘This is wine.’”

for, on drinking, his sight and smell and taste and touch would all be affected; but it was desirable that his hearing should also be pleased.§

Music was condemned by the Prophet almost as severely as wine. “Singing and hearing songs,” said he, cause hypocrisy to grow in the heart, like as water promoteth the growth of corn: ||—and musical instruments he declared to be among the most powerful means by which the Devil seduces man. An instrument of music is the Devil’s muëddin, serving to call men to his worship, as stated in a former note. Of the hypocrisy of those attached to music, the following anecdote presents

\* The Arabic names of these flowers are, yásameen, nisreen, zahr (or zahr nárinj), soosan, reehán (or habák), nemám, bahár, ukhowán, neelófar, beshneen, jullanár or julnár, khashkhásh, khiṭmee, zaafarán, ’oşfur, kettán, bákilla and lebláb, and lóz.

† “Bán,” and “khiláf” or “khaláf.” Both these names are applied to the same tree (which, according to Forskal, differs slightly from the *salix Ægyptiaca* of Linnæus) by the author of the *Halbet el-Kumeyt* and by the modern Egyptians.

‡ *Halbet el-Kumeyt*, chap. xiv.

§ *Idem*, chap. xi.

|| *Mishkát el-Maṣabeeh*, vol. ii. p. 425.



an instance :—A drunken young man with a lute in his hand was brought one night before the Khaleefeh 'Abd El-Melik, the son of Marwán, who, pointing to the instrument, asked what it was, and what was its use. The youth made no answer ; so he asked those around him ; but they also remained silent, till one, more bold than the rest, said, “ O Prince of the Faithful, this is a lute : it is made by taking some wood of the pistachio-tree, and cutting it into thin pieces, and glueing these together, and then attaching over them these chords, which, when a beautiful girl touches them, send forth sounds more pleasant than those of rain falling upon a desert land ; and my wife is separated from me by a triple divorce if every one in this council is not acquainted with it, and doth not know it as well as I do, and thou the first of them, O Prince of the Faithful.” The Khaleefeh laughed, and ordered that the young man should be discharged.\*

The latter saying of the Prophet, respecting the Devil, suggests to me the insertion of another anecdote, related of himself by Ibraheem El-Móšilee, the father of Is-hák ; both of whom were very celebrated musicians. I give a translation of it somewhat abridged.—“ I asked Er-Rasheed,” says Ibraheem, “ to grant me permission to spend a day at home with my female slaves and brothers ; and he gave me two thousand deenárs, and appointed the next Saturday for this purpose. I caused the meats and wine and other necessaries to be prepared, and ordered the chamberlain to close the door, and admit no one : but while I was sitting, with my attendants standing in the form of a curved line before

\* Halbet el-Kumeyt, chap. xiv.

me, there entered, and approached me, a sheykh, reverend and dignified and comely in appearance, wearing short khuffs,\* and two soft gowns, with a *kalensuweh*† upon his head, and in his hand a silver-headed staff; and sweet odours were diffused from his clothes. I was enraged with the chamberlain for admitting him; but on his saluting me in a very courteous manner, I returned his salutation, and desired him to sit down. He then began to repeat to me stories, tales of war, and poetry; so that my anger was appeased, and it appeared to me that my servants had not presumed to admit him until acquainted with his politeness and courteousness; I therefore said to him, ‘Hast thou any inclination for meat?’ He answered, ‘I have no want of it.’—‘And the wine?’ said I. He replied, ‘Yes.’ So I drank a large cupful, and he did the same, and then said to me, ‘O Ibraheem, wilt thou let us hear some specimen of thy art in which thou hast excelled the people of thy profession?’ I was angry at his words; but I made light of the matter, and, having taken the lute and tuned it, I played and sang; whereupon he said, ‘Thou hast performed well, O Ibraheem.’ I became more enraged, and said within myself, ‘He is not content with coming hither without permission, and asking me to sing, but he calls me by my name, and proves himself unworthy of my conversation.’ He then said, ‘Wilt thou let us hear more? If so, we will requite thee.’ And I took the lute, and sang, using my utmost care, on account of his saying, ‘we will requite thee.’ He was moved

\* Soft boots, worn inside the slippers or shoes.

† This is so vaguely described by the Arab lexicographers, that I cannot obtain a definite notion of its form.

with delight, and said, 'Thou hast performed well, O my master Ibraheem : '—adding, ' Wilt thou permit thy slave to sing ? ' I answered, ' As thou pleasest : '—but thinking lightly of his sense to sing after me. He took the lute, and tuned it ; and, by Allah ! I imagined that the lute spoke in his hands with an eloquent Arab tongue. He proceeded to sing some verses commencing,—

' My heart is wounded ! Who will give me, for it, a heart without a wound ? ' "

The narrator continues by saying, that ne was struck dumb and motionless with ecstasy ; and that the strange sheykh, after having played and sung again, and taught him an enchanting air (with which he afterwards enraptured his patron, the Khaleefeh), vanished. Ibraheem, in alarm, seized his sword ; and was the more amazed when he found that the porter had not seen the stranger enter or leave the house ; but he heard his voice again, outside, telling him that he was Aboo Murrah (the Devil).\*—Two other anecdotes of a similar kind are related in the work from which the above is taken.

Ibraheem El-Móşilee, his son Is-ḥák, and Mukhárik† (a pupil of the former), were especially celebrated among the Arab musicians, and among the distinguished men of the reign of Hároon Er-Rasheed. Is-ḥák El-Móşilee relates of his father Ibraheem, that when Er-Rasheed took him into his service he gave him a hundred and fifty thousand dirhems, and allotted him a monthly pension of ten thousand dirhems, besides occasional presents [one

\* Halbet el-Kumeyt, chap. xiv.

† I am not sure of the orthography of this name, particularly with respect to the first and last vowels, having never found it written with the vowel-points. It is sometimes written with ḥ for kh, and f for k.

of which is mentioned as amounting to a hundred thousand dirhems for a single song], and the produce of his (Ibraheem's) farms: he had food constantly prepared for him; three sheep every day for his kitchen, besides birds; three thousand dirhems were allowed him for fruits, perfumes, &c., every month, and a thousand dirhems for his clothing; "and with all this," says his son, "he died without leaving more than three thousand deenárs, a sum not equal to his debts, which I paid after his death."\*—Ibraheem was of Persian origin, and of a high family. He was commonly called the Nedeem (or cup-companion), being Er-Rasheed's favourite companion at the wine-table; and his son, who enjoyed the like distinction with El-Ma-moon, received the same appellation, as well as that of "Son of the Nedeem." Ibraheem was the most famous musician of his time, at least till his son attained celebrity.†

Is-hák El-Móšilee was especially famous as a musician; but he was also a good poet, accomplished in general literature, and endowed with great wit. He was honoured above all other persons in the pay of El-Ma-moon, and enjoyed a long life; but for many years before his death he was blind.‡

Mukhárik appears to have rivalled his master Ibraheem. The latter, he relates, took him to perform before Er-Rasheed, who used to have a curtain suspended between him and the musicians. "Others," he says, "sang, and he was unmoved; but when I sang, he

\* Halbet el-Kumeyt, *loco laudato*.

† He was born in the year of the Flight 125, and died in 213, or, according to some, 188.—Abulfedæ Annales, vol. ii. pp. 150 and 675.

‡ He was born in the year of the Flight 150, and died in 235.—Idem, adnot. pp. 691 *et seq.*; and Mir-át ez-Zemán, events of the year 235.



came forth from behind the curtain, and exclaimed, ‘Young man, hither!’ and he seated me upon the sereer [a kind of sofa], and gave me thirty thousand dirhems.”\* The following anecdote (which I abridge a little in translation) shows his excellence in the art which he professed, and the effect of melody on an Arab:—“After drinking with the Khaleefeh† a whole night, I asked his permission,” says he, “to take the air in the Ruṣáfeh,‡ which he granted; and while I was walking there, I saw a damsel who appeared as if the rising sun beamed from her face. She had a basket, and I followed her. She stopped at a fruiterer’s, and bought some fruit; and observing that I was following her, she looked back and abused me several times; but still I followed her until she arrived at a great door, after having filled her basket with fruits and flowers and similar things. When she had entered, and the door was closed behind her, I sat down opposite to it, deprived of my reason by her beauty; and knew that there must be in the house a wine-party. The sun went down upon me while I sat there; and at length there came two handsome young men on asses, and they knocked at the door, and when they were admitted I entered with them; the master of the house thinking that I was their companion, and they imagining that I was one of his friends. A repast was brought, and we ate, and washed our hands, and were perfumed. The master of the house then said to the two young men, ‘Have ye any desire that I should call such a one?’ (mentioning a female name). They answered, ‘If thou wilt grant us the

\* Mir-át ez-Zemán, events of the year 231. He died in this year.

† I believe this Khaleefeh was El-Ma-moon.

‡ A quarter in Baghdád.

favour, well:—so he called for her, and she came, and lo, she was the maiden whom I had seen before, and who had abused me. A servant-maid preceded her, bearing her lute, which she placed in her lap. Wine was then brought, and she sang, while we drank and shook with delight. ‘Whose air is that?’ they asked. She answered, ‘Seedee Mukhárik’s.’ She then sang another air, which, also, she said was mine; while they drank by pints; she looking aside and doubtfully at me until I lost my patience, and called out to her to do her best: but in attempting to do so, singing a third air, she overstrained her voice, and I said, ‘Thou hast made a mistake:’—upon which she threw the lute from her lap, in anger, so that she nearly broke it; saying, ‘Take it thyself, and let us hear thee.’ I answered, ‘Well;’ and having taken it and tuned it perfectly, sang the first of the airs which she had sung before me; whereupon all of them sprang upon their feet, and kissed my head. I then sang the second air, and the third; and their reason almost fled, from ecstasy. The master of the house, after asking his guests, and being told by them that they knew me not, came to me, and, kissing my hand, said, ‘By Allah, my master, who art thou?’ I answered, ‘By Allah, I am the singer Mukhárik.’—‘And for what purpose,’ said he, kissing both my hands, ‘camest thou hither?’ I replied, ‘As a spunger;’—and related what had happened with respect to the maiden: whereupon he looked towards his two companions, and said to them, ‘Tell me, by Allah, do ye not know that I gave for that girl thirty thousand dirhems, and have refused to sell her?’ They answered, ‘It is so.’ Then said he, ‘I take you as witnesses that I have given her to

him.'—'And we,' said the two friends, 'will pay thee two-thirds of her price.' So he put me in possession of the girl, and in the evening, when I departed, he presented me also with rich dresses and other gifts, with all of which I went away ; and as I passed the places where the maiden had abused me, I said, 'Repeat thy words to me ;' but she could not, for shame. Holding the girl's hand, I went with her immediately to the Khaleefeh, whom I found in anger at my long absence ; but when I related my story to him he was surprised, and laughed, and ordered that the master of the house and his two friends should be brought before him, that he might requite them : to the former he gave forty thousand dirhems ; to each of his two friends, thirty thousand ; and to me, a hundred thousand ; and I kissed his feet, and departed."\*

It is particularly necessary for the Arab musician, that he have a retentive memory, well stocked with choice pieces of poetry, and with facetious or pleasant anecdotes, interspersed with songs ; and that he have a ready wit, aided by dramatic talent, to employ these materials with good effect. If to such qualifications he adds fair attainments in the difficult rules of grammar, a degree of eloquence, comic humour, and good temper, and is not surpassed by many in his art, he is sure to be a general favourite. Very few Muslims of the higher classes have condescended to study music, because they would have been despised by their inferiors for doing so ; or because they themselves have despised or condemned the art. Ibraheem, the son of the Khaleefeh El-Mahdee, and competitor of El-Ma-moon, was a remarkable exception :

\* Halbet el-Kumeyt, chap. vii.

he is said to have been an excellent musician, and a good singer.

In the houses of the wealthy, the vocal and instrumental performers were usually (as is the case in many houses in the present age) domestic female slaves, well instructed in their art by hired male or female professors. In the work before us, these slaves are commonly described as standing or sitting unveiled in the presence of male guests; but, from several descriptions of musical entertainments that I have met with in Arabic works, it appears that, according to the more approved custom in respectable society, they were concealed on such occasions behind a curtain, which generally closed the front of an elevated recess. In all the houses of wealthy Arabs that I have entered, one or each of the larger saloons has an elevated closet, the front of which is closed by a screen of wooden lattice-work, to serve as an orchestra for the domestic or hired female singers and instrumental performers. Of the hired performers any further mention is not here required; but of the slaves and free ladies who supplied their place a few words must be added, as very necessary to illustrate the preceding and many other tales in this work.

To a person acquainted with modern Arabian manners, it must appear inconsistent with truth to describe such females as exposing their faces before strange men, unless he can discover in sober histories some evidence of their having been less strict in this respect than the generality of Arab females at the present period. I find, however, a remarkable proof that such was the case in the latter part of the ninth century of the Flight, and the beginning of the tenth: that is, about the end



of the fifteenth century of our era. The famous historian Es-Suyootē, who flourished at this period, in his preface to a curious work on wedlock, written to correct the corrupt manners of his age, says:—"Seeing that the women of this time deck themselves with the attire of prostitutes, and walk in the sooks (or market-streets), like female warriors against the religion, and uncover their faces and hands before men, to incline [men's] hearts to them by evil suggestions, and play at feasts with young men, thereby meriting the anger of the Compassionate [*i. e.* God], and go forth to the public baths and assemblies, with various kinds of ornaments and perfumes, and with conceited gait; for the which they shall be congregated in Hell-fire, for opposing the good, and on account of this their affected gait, while to their husbands they are disobedient, behaving to them in the reverse manner, excepting when they fear to abridge their liberty of going abroad by such conduct; for they are like swine and apes in their interior nature, though like daughters of Adam in their exterior appearance; especially the women of this age; not advising their husbands in matters of religion, but the latter erring in permitting them to go out to every assembly; sisters of devils and demons, &c. &c.... I have undertaken the composition of this volume."\* A more convincing testimony than this, I think, cannot be required.

The lute (el-'ood) is the only instrument that is generally described as used at the entertainments which we have been considering. Engravings of this and other musical instruments are given in my work on the Modern

\* Nuzhet el-Mutaämmil wa-Murshid el-Mutaähhil.

Egyptians. The Arab viol (called *rabáb*) was commonly used by inferior performers.

The Arab music is generally of a soft and plaintive character, and particularly that of the most refined description, which is distinguished by a remarkable peculiarity, the division of tones into thirds. The singer aims at distinct enunciation of the words, for this is justly admired; and delights in a trilling style. The airs of songs are commonly very short and simple, adapted to a single verse, or even to a single hemistich; but in the instrumental music there is more variety.

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#### XI.—DESCRIPTION OF ARAB FANS. (See page 130.)

The kind of fan most commonly used by the Arabs has the form of a small flag. The flap, which is about six or seven inches in width, and somewhat more in length, is composed of split palm-leaves of various colours, or some plain and others coloured, neatly plaited or woven together. The handle is a piece of palm-stick, about twice the length of the flap. This fan is used by men as well as women, and for the double purpose of moderating the heat and repelling the flies, which in warm weather are excessively annoying. It is more effective than the ordinary European fan, and requires less exertion. Arabian fans of the kind here described, brought from Mekkeh to Cairo as articles of merchandise, may be purchased in the latter city for a sum less than a penny each; they are mostly made in the Hejáz. Another kind of fan, generally composed of black ostrich feathers of large dimensions, and ornamented with a small piece

of looking-glass on the lower part of the front, is often used by the Arabs. A kind of fly-whisk made of palm-leaves is also in very general use. A servant or slave is often employed to wave it over the master or mistress during a meal or an afternoon nap.

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XII.—ON THE WASHING, SHROUDING, AND BURIAL OF THE DEAD. (See page 149.)

The ceremonies attendant upon death and burial are nearly the same in the cases of men and women. The head of the dying person is turned towards the direction of Mekkeh. When the spirit is departing, the eyes are closed; and then, or immediately after, the women of the house commence a loud lamentation, in which many of the females of the neighbourhood generally come to join. Hired female mourners are also usually employed; each of whom accompanies her exclamations of “Alas for him,” &c., by beating a tambourine. If possible, the corpse is buried on the day of the death; but when this cannot be done, the lamentation of the women is continued during the ensuing night; and a recitation of several chapters, or of the whole of the *Qur-án* is performed by one or more men hired for the purpose.

The washing consists, first, in the performance of the ordinary ablution which is preparatory to prayer, with the exception of the cleansing of the mouth and nose, and secondly, in an ablution of the whole body with warm water and soap, or with water in which some leaves of the lote-tree have been boiled. The jaw is bound up, the eyes are closed, and the nostrils, &c. are

stuffed with cotton; and the corpse is sprinkled with a mixture of water, pounded camphor, dried and pounded leaves of the lote-tree, and sometimes other dried and pulverized leaves, &c., and with rose-water. The ankles are bound together; and the hands placed upon the breast.

The grave-clothing of a poor man consists of a piece or two of cotton, or a kind of bag; but the corpse of a man of wealth is generally wrapped first in muslin, then in cotton cloth of a thicker texture; next in a piece of striped stuff of silk and cotton intermixed, or in a *kaftán* (a long vest) of similar stuff, merely stitched together; and over these is wrapped a Kashmeer shawl. The colours most approved for the grave-clothes are white and green. The body thus shrouded is placed in a bier, which is usually covered with a Kashmeer shawl, and borne on the shoulders of three or four men, generally friends of the deceased.

There are some slight differences in the funeral ceremonies observed in different Arab countries; but a sufficient notion of them will be conveyed by briefly describing those which prevail in Cairo. The procession to the tomb is generally headed by a number of poor men, mostly blind, who, walking two and two, or three and three together, chant, in a melancholy tone, the profession (or two professions) of the faith, or sometimes other words. They are usually followed by some male relations and friends of the deceased; and these by a group of school-boys, chanting in a higher tone, and one of them bearing a copy of the *Kur-án*, or of one of its thirty sections, placed upon a kind of desk formed of palm-sticks, and covered with an embroidered kerchief. Then follows



the bier, borne head-foremost. Friends of the deceased relieve one another in the office of carrying it; and casual passengers often take part in this service, which is esteemed highly meritorious. Behind the bier walk the female mourners, composing a numerous group, often more than a dozen; or, if of a wealthy family, they ride. Each of those who belong to the family of the deceased has a strip of cotton stuff or muslin, generally blue, bound round her head, over the head-veil, and carries a handkerchief, usually dyed blue (the colour of mourning), which she sometimes holds over her shoulders, and at other times twirls with both hands over her head or before her face, while she cries and shrieks almost incessantly; and the hired female mourners, accompanying the group, often celebrate the praises of the deceased, though this was forbidden by the Prophet.—The funeral procession of a man of wealth is sometimes preceded by several camels, bearing bread and water to give to the poor at the tomb; and closed by the led horses of some of the attendants, and by a buffalo or other animal to be sacrificed at the tomb, where its flesh is distributed to the poor, to atone for some of the minor sins of the deceased.

The bier used for conveying the corpse of a boy or a female has a cover of wood, over which a shawl is spread; and at the head is an upright piece of wood: upon the upper part of this, in the case of a boy, is fixed a turban, with several ornaments of female head-dress; and in the case of a female it is similarly decked; but without the turban.

A short prayer is recited over the dead either in a mosque or in a place particularly dedicated to this service, in or adjacent to the burial-ground. The body is

then conveyed, in the same manner as before, to the tomb. This is a hollow, oblong vault, one side of which faces the direction of Mekkeh, generally large enough to contain four or more bodies, and having an oblong monument of stone or brick constructed over it, with a stela at the head and foot. Upon the former of these two stelæ (which is often inscribed with a text from the *Kur-án*, and the name of the deceased, with the date of his death), a turban, cap, or other head-dress, is sometimes carved, showing the rank or class of the person or persons buried beneath ; and in many cases a cupola supported by four walls, or by columns, &c., is constructed over the smaller monument. The body is laid on its right side, or inclined by means of a few crude bricks, so that the face is turned towards Mekkeh ; and a person is generally employed to dictate to the deceased the answers which he should give when he is examined by the two angels Munkar and Nekeer. If the funeral be that of a person of rank or wealth, the bread and water, &c. before mentioned are then distributed to the poor.\*

\* If the reader desire more detailed information on the subject of this note, I refer him to my work on the Modern Egyptians, vol. iii. chap. xxviii.

FINIS.

## ERRATA TO THE PREVIOUS VOLUMES.

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### VOL. I.

- Frontispiece, *for* "Interior, &c." *read* "Mosque of Ibn Tooloon."  
Page x. line 4, and page 160, line 9, *for* "El Záme," *read* "El Gáme."  
Page 20, line 11, *for* "Arabic," *read* "Arabian."  
Page 81, line 2, *omit* "the" before "Sennár."  
Page 93, line 1, *for* "meal," *read* "meat."  
Page 100, line 9, *for* "El Cawákeh," *read* "El Lawakeh."  
Page 127, Explanation of Plan of Cairo and its Environs, *for* "El-Khalleg," *read* "El-Khaleeg."  
Page 182, line 9, *for* "El-Kat'ah," *read* "El-Kal'ah."  
Page 206, line 16, and subsequently throughout the work, *for* "Mrs. Sieder," *read* "Mrs. Lieder."

### VOL. II.

- Contents, page vii. line 12, and page 122, line 27, *for* "Dr. Lipsius," *read* "Dr. Lepsius."  
Page 63, line 25, *for* "nurz," *read* "mezz."  
Page 126, line 15, *for* "Syrian Desert," *read* "Libyan Desert."









